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VOLUME 20, No. 7

Edited by

Peter Hugh Reed

Thirty-five Cents



In Memorium
Kathleen Ferrier
1912 - 1953

a memorable artist whose recordings are certain to be studied by musicians for their expansive powers of expression and by music listeners for their unique and personal communication. (see page 213)

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The American
**RECORD
GUIDE**



MARCH 1954

Volume XX, No. 7

formerly **The American Music Lover**

The Berlioz Society

AN ARTICLE of this same title appeared in our December issue. In the interim, it is our pleasant duty to report, the "case" has been won.

The Berlioz Society is now a reality, with a rapidly growing membership and an organization that is already putting wheels on the original idea and making them turn fast.

Both myself and James Lyons, one of your associate editors, were among the founding members and are presently ensconced on the advisory board. Mr. Lyons wrote a piece about the Society for *The New York Herald Tribune* in January that added fuel to the fire kindled in these pages. Then the cudgels were taken up by *The Times*. By this time the movement really had gathered momentum.

From all over the country, eminences and just plain listeners have rushed to join the burgeoning movement in numbers far beyond the fondest expectation of the enthusiast who, in this journal, had first broached the feasibility of a Berlioz Society. This is, of course, W. E. Gillespie of Exeter, N. H. (10 Wheelwright Ave., Exeter, in case you want to send him your dues) who is now secretary-treasurer of the Society.

You may have heard that the president is none less than Charles Munch, conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and an unreconstructed Berlioz partisan, hence the logical man for the job. The vice president, an equally logical choice, is Duncan S. Robinson of New York

(33 Fifth Ave.), whose energy and dedication have known no bounds in the surmounting of difficult pre-natal problems.

The advisory board, in addition to myself and Mr. Lyons, is as follows: Leon Barzin, musical director of the National Orchestral Association; Edward Tatnall Canby, columnist for *Harper's Magazine* and *Audio Engineering*; John M. Conly, editor of *High Fidelity*; Olin Downes, music critic of *The New York Times*; Henry L. Gage, vice president of the Westminster Recording Co.; Roland Gelatt, feature editor of *The Saturday Review*; Jay S. Harrison, music editor of *The New York Herald Tribune*; Harold Lawrence, director of recorded music for WQXR; Goddard Lieberson, executive vice president of Columbia Records; Herman Neuman, music director of New York's Municipal Broadcasting System; George R. Marek, director of artists and repertoire for RCA Victor; Carleton Sprague Smith and Philip Miller, respectively the chief and the assistant chief of the music division of the New York Public Library; Dimitri Mitropoulos, musical director of the New York Philharmonic-Symphony; Pierre Monteux, conductor emeritus of the San Francisco Symphony *et al*; Jean Morel, head of the orchestra department of the Juilliard School of Music; Eugene Ormandy, music director of the Philadelphia Orchestra; David Randolph, director of the Randolph Singers; Thomas K. Scherman, founder and musical director of the Little Orchestra Society;

Deems Taylor, erstwhile commentator and working composer; and G. Wallace Woodworth, director of the Harvard Glee Club and the Radcliffe Choral Society.

Recent developments have included Sir Thomas Beecham's acceptance of the honorary presidency and an announcement by Columbia Records that the forthcoming *L'Enfance du Christ* is being issued in honor of the Society—the album cover will carry a statement to that effect. All this and more has germinated from the proposal that was set before the world by way of *The American Record Guide* a short three months ago. We take pride in this assurance that our little publication is not without a certain influence quite out of proportion to its size.

The Editor

Three Sopranos

MARIA CEBOTARI SINGS SCENES FROM LA BOHEME AND MADAM BUTTERFLY; Maria Cebotari with Peter Anders and Helge Roswaenge, Symphony Orchestra of Radio Berlin conducted by Arthur Rother. Urania LP 7105, \$5.95.

MILANOV SINGS ARIAS from La Forza del Destino, La Gioconda, Aida, Il Trovatore, Cavalleria Rusticana; Zinka Milanov with assisting artists, the Robert Shaw Chorale, RCA Victor Orchestra conducted by Renato Cellini. RCA VICTOR LP 1777, \$5.45.

IRMGARD SEEFRIED SINGS *Weihnachtslieder, Op. 8* (Cornelius); *Ave Maria, Rosamunde—Romance, and Seligkeit* (Schubert); *Maria Wiegenlied* (Reger); *Das schlafende Jesuskind* (Wolf); with Erik Werba at the piano. Decca 10" LP DL-7545, \$3.85.

▲THESE are three fine vocal records. The first derives from a tape made several years ago when the late Maria Cebotari was featured in a radio presentation of scenes from Puccini's *La Boheme* and *Madam Butterfly*. Cebotari, who died a couple of years ago at the age of 39, was a great favorite in Berlin as well as in Milan. Hers was a voice of passionate verve and lovely nuance; she sang equally well in German or Italian. Here, of course, she sings in German. Somehow, one does not resent her Puccini in German as much as one resents the two tenors! As the editor has said, this derives from her knowledge of the Italian text and its rightful placement. We hear on this record the scene in Act I of *Bohème* from just after Mimi's entrance to the completion of her *Mi chiamano Mimi*; then skipping to the final duet. After that, we hear *Mimi's Farewell* in Act III and the duet part of the final quartet. Side 2 contains Cebotari's fervent singing of *Un bel di* and the Love Duet from Act I. Urania has another disc of Cebotari in which she sings the *Butterfly* duet with Walter Ludwig, who is more convincing as Pinkerton. The present recording is better balanced, however.

The Milanov record offers re-issues of her earlier 78 rpm recordings. The sum-

(Continued on page 240)

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The Singers' Toll for 1953

by Leo Reimans



Friedrich Schorr as Hans Sachs

OF ALL the singers who passed away in 1953, the greatest loss was the tragically early death of KATHLEEN FERRIER on October 8 in her forty-first year. It made the deepest impression everywhere. It is difficult to realize that this singularly gifted English contralto's career lasted only ten years. A Lancashire lass, with the blue eyes and the happy disposition of her people, she worked in her early adult years as telephone operator in Blackburn and as a piano accompanist on the side. At a song contest, one day, she boasted that she could do better than the contestants and, on a shilling bet from a friend, she proved her ability by winning the top award. After this, she took up singing seriously. When she gained world fame, she would often say to her admirers, "Well, you know, in Lancashire, everyone sings."

It was just after the war that I first heard Miss Ferrier. This was in the Continental premiere of Britten's *The Rape of Lucrece*. Hers was a warm, deep, noble and remarkably moving voice. It was strange that I should have first heard and seen her in opera, as she seldom appeared in the theatre. Her only other role was Gluck's *Orfeo*, which I also had the privilege of hearing at the Holland Festival of 1949, under Pierre Monteux. Why she never attempted other parts (she would have been an ideal Favorita) I have no idea. She was a most beautiful woman, who radiated personality and whose acting was far above the average. Perhaps there was a native-born reserve in her character that made her prefer oratorio. I heard her many times in recital and, unlike some critics, came to the

conclusion that she was greatest in noble music on the grand scale: in Handel, Bach, Gluck, and surprisingly, in Mahler. I cared less for her interpretation of the standard German lieder. But for Mahler, she had a remarkable affinity, and her interpretation of *Das Lied von der Erde*, the *Kindertotenlieder* and some other great cycles was a moving experience. There is one almost consistently overlooked aspect of her art which, to me, remains as unforgettable as her Mahler and Handel, perhaps even more so. That was her singing of simple folk songs at the end of her recitals. Not a trace of mannerism or coolness there! The Celtic strain in her blood came out as nowhere else in these, and her singing of all kinds of folk songs was in the same class as that of McCormack, Roland Hayes, Gervase Elwes or Plunkett Greene. Luckily, she recorded profusely in her short career, both on Columbia and London. The latter concern fortunately allowed her to record almost everything that she wished.

Most of Miss Ferrier's Mahler, Bach, Handel and Gluck has been preserved (although her *Orfeo* was marred by an insensitive conductor). We also have quite a number of her Schubert, Schumann and Brahms lieder, including cycles, and best of all we have her collections of folk songs. Perhaps the most moving and characteristic of these is the unaccompanied *Blow the Wind Southerly*—surely one of the loveliest recordings of its kind ever made. Though one knew the nature of her illness for over a year, one refused to believe in it, especially as she continued to sing so beautifully. Her recent Bach-Handel recordings, made under

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Boult, were made between her two operations, and as recently as last February she sang two performances of *Orfeo* at Covent Garden. One is tempted to apply to her the words of the deeply moving epigram by Hilaire Belloc, who also died in 1953:

"Of this bad world the loveliest and the best
Has smiled and said Good Night, and gone to rest."

Carla Spletter

EVEN MORE tragic was the death of the German soprano CARLA SPLETTER whom American record buyers will remember as the sprightly Anchen in the abridged version of *Freischuetz*, of Deutsche Grammophon origin but issued by Decca in the U. S. A. She recorded many operatic highlights for Telefunken before the war. In those days, she was the principal lyric soubrette of the Berlin Opera. After the war she moved to Hamburg, where her husband was a well-known physician. This past year, she suddenly leaped to international fame with her performance of Lulu in the Alban Berg opera, first at the German premiere in Essen, and then with that company at the Holland Festival. Her extraordinary abilities as singer and actress were evidenced in this extremely difficult role, which requires that the singer be on stage practically for the entire performance. A niece of Frank Wedekind (on whose two dramas the opera is based) said to me that she had seen every great Lulu of the spoken stage, including Elisabeth Bergner and Wedekind's own wife, but that none came so near to the author's ideal conception of this elemental woman as Carla Spletter.

I met her after the Holland performance. She was a charming woman with magnificent red hair, looking not a day over thirty, though she was all of forty-one. She seemed to radiate health and happiness, and yet three months later she died. Only then, I learned that she was already a dying woman when she sang Lulu in Holland and that I had attended the farewell performance of her life. She was afflicted by the same incurable disease as was Kathleen Ferrier (at the same age) and as Maria Cebotari before her. Her husband and her doctor concealed her condition from her, knowing that she would rather sing as long as possible. Thus, she was able to have her greatest triumph as a fitting apotheosis of her career.

THE THIRD great tragedy of the year occurred at Naples, and went unnoticed. A few days after the Bayreuth Company had performed the *Ring* there, the body of the bass WERNER FAULHABER was found on the beach, at the bottom of a steep rock. He had stayed behind for a short holiday, and had presumably fallen from the rock, a height of several hundred feet. He was twenty-seven years of age. Many visitors of post-war Bayreuth will recall him as Donner in *Das Rheingold* and the *Nachtwatch* in *Die Meistersinger*. He sang the latter part in the Columbia recording, and he was also heard in some minor roles in Urania productions. He was still young and in the formative

period of his career. Just this past year, his possibilities as a character bass-baritone were discovered, and he was engaged to sing Mozart's *Figaro* in Munich between his usual Bayreuth appearances. He died a month before this, and though his name appeared in the prospectus, he never sang the part there. I think his death was more tragic than either Ferrier's or Spletter's, because they died at the height of their career, while his came just before recognition was due him.

QUITE ANOTHER sort of tragedy was that of SUSANNE ADAMS (1876-1953), a name known today only to collectors of gramophonic *incunabulae*. Adams was perhaps the last surviving of the great generation of Marchesi pupils. When she made her debut in the 1890s at the Paris Opera, she was coached for Juliette and Marguerite by Gounod himself. It is said that she made her debut prematurely, against the advice of her teacher (an incident wrongly attributed to Melba in Munsell's movie about that long-suffering prima donna). This theory seems to be borne out by the shortness of Susanne Adams' career. While it lasted, she had great successes both at the Metropolitan (1898-1903) and at Covent Garden. When she retired in 1903, it was said that it was owing to her husband's death. But in 1907, she returned to the theatre, singing in vaudeville—quite a step down from her auspicious beginnings. It was clear then that she had lost most of the luster of her voice. For 50 years, she lived in retirement in London, where for a time she ran a super deluxe laundry, frequented by the nobility, Maharajas and the revue stars. Thus, she outlived her fame by half a century, remaining a figure of a marvelous and remote epoch. She was one of the first singers to appear on celebrity records—both Columbia and Victor. These early discs are highly prized, if not prized. I have always thought them somewhat over-rated and can hear little vocal magic in them, as I do in those of Sembrich, Eames, Melba and others. Susanne Adams was a good average singer, but certainly not a great one, nor an outstanding personality.

Maria Labia

IF YOU want a personality, there was MARIA LABIA, who also died in 1953. Only a few months before her death, I received her inscribed memoirs called, in Italian, *Looking backwards... how tiresome*. She was a noblewoman born in 1885, and not the first of her distinguished family to adopt an operatic career. Her elder sister Fausta preceded her; the present Gianna Perea-Labia is Fausta's daughter. The whole career of Maria Labia was unorthodox. What could be stranger than an Italian soprano making her debut as Tosca in Berlin, singing in German? And, not at the Imperial Opera, but at the less impressive, but far more artistic private Comic Opera, then directed by Hans Gregor. She became immediately the toast of Berlin—the successor there of Geraldine Farrar. They sang many of the same roles and were the same type of actress. . . . Both were strikingly beautiful. Even the photographs of Labia are breath-taking—enormous black eyes, a perfectly rounded face,

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and a bewitching smile. She was the first to make d'Albert's *Tiefland* a great success. It is difficult to understand why she did not have greater success in America, where she sang for one season with Hammerstein. Only her performance of Tosca seems to have left an impression.

Until 1904, Labia's greatest successes were in Germany, though she also became popular in Paris. She specialized in roles that allowed for acting interest—Tosca, Violetta, Marta in *Tiefland*, Salome, Carmen were among her favorite parts. In 1915, she was arrested on the unfounded suspicion that she was a German spy, but her innocence was quickly proved and for the rest of the war she sang in Stockholm, returning to Italy in December 1918 to sing Giorgietta in the Italian premiere of Puccini's *Il Tabarro* at Rome in January 1919. Her partners on this occasion were Edward Johnson and Carlo Galeffi. In June, she sang the same role in the premiere of *Il Tabarro* in Buenos Aires. During the 1920s, she gradually abandoned her early veristic triumphs, and concentrated more and more on works of Wolf-Ferrari, and on concerts of early Italian music. She was the first Suore Felicia who tripped through the *Quattro Rusteghi*. It is a pity that so few recordings of hers exist, because basically she had a fine voice, and vocally her interpretations were as interesting as her acting and striking appearance. Her Odeons were made during her early career. They include several duets with Jadowker. It is paradoxical that her best records are not those from *Carmen*, but those from *Un Ballo in Maschera* and *Il Trovatore*. Unfortunately, they are sung in German. She next made some recordings for Edison, where her Amberola cylinders from *Tosca* and *Cavalleria* (sung in Italian) are her best recordings. Later, she made some discs for Edison, but most of these were lost in the 1914 fire. Of them, I have a copy of Tosti's *Serenata* which is marvelous, but much too highly pitched. About 1936, she made some electrical recordings in Berlin for Telefunken, for her own use, of Italian *arie antiche* by Paisiello, Pergolesi, Vivaldi, etc. She promised me her last set, but could not send them during the war. Afterwards, she entrusted them to someone else to send them to me from Switzerland, but they never reached me.

Jeanne Maubourg

ANOTHER important artist who recorded too seldom was JEANNE MAUBOURG who died this past year in Montreal, where she had lived for almost 40 years. This Belgian mezzo-soprano began her career at the Brussels *Monnaie*, then went to Covent Garden and to the Metropolitan (1909-14) during the palmy days of Toscanini. If one scans the pages of Seltsam's *Metropolitan Annals* and Kolodin's *Metropolitan Opera*, one encounters her name in the most illustrious casts—as Meg Page in *Falstaff*, as Emilia in Toscanini's revival of *Otello* with Alda, Slezak and Amato, as Nicklaus in the all-star *Tales of Hoffman* with Hempel, Fremstad, Bori, Gilly and others, in the premiere of Wolf-Ferrari's *Le Donne Curiose* and many other important occasions. She was a

versatile artist, a fine actress who looked well in travesty. She never made a record (as far as I know) until 1924, when she sang three d/s Edinons in the French-Canadian list. These included such oddities as a French song, *Berceuse Negre*, which was actually a French version of *Ma Curly Headed Babby*, and a *Chant de l'Oiseleur* which is Zeller's well known *Nightingale Song* from the Tyrolean, also in French disguise. More important were some Yvette Guilbert-like folk songs, two of which were so racy that it was a good thing Edison did not understand the words. She sang these with much temperament, and they reveal something of her personality.

THE NAME of KATE HELWIG will be unknown to many American collectors, yet she made an impressive list of German Polydors between 1906 and 1921, all on the cheaper green label, but all well sung. She began her career in Berlin about 1914, but went to Cologne a few years later where she became the most popular soprano in the company. She was one of those German sopranos who sang every type of role, from *Carmen* to *Gilda*. If one encounters a record of hers on an auction list in the U.S.A., one should seek to acquire it. The buyer will be rewarded by a charming voice, much more so than by many higher-priced celebrities whose voices did not take kindly to the old recording horn.

Friedrich Schorr

DURING her Cologne years, Helwig must have sung innumerable times with a promising young baritone, FRIEDRICH SCHORR (1888-1953), who needs no introduction to American collectors. Few know that he sang small parts with the Chicago Opera as early as 1912. His real career as a Wagnerian baritone, however, started in Cologne, and in those days he made his little known and extremely interesting acoustic recordings for Polydor. The prize of these was his Lysiardi aria from Weber's *Euryanthe*, to this day its only recording. (I cannot understand how this fine score has escaped so far, except for a wretched LP recording with third-rate provincial singers.) This aria was by no means his only unexpected title in his fine Polydor list. In America, Schorr made one or two Brunswick recordings, quite as rare nowadays, including some songs in English. His many Victors (and European HMVs) are, however, his best known recordings, and luckily they contain most of his Wotan and Hans Sachs, though recorded in odds and ends. Some otherwise, unrecorded on Victor, Hans Sachs excerpts can be found in a set of Electrola discs (EJ277/86) which was made from the stage of the *Unter der Linden* Opera in 1928 and issued without singers' names. Most of the Wagnerian baritones before Schorr were tonally dry or else declamatory shouters in the worst possible Bayreuth schooling as taught by Julius Kniebe. Schorr was always first and foremost the singer, like Leider. He never shouted but achieved the most moving results by shading inflections in his beautiful voice, which had the mellowness of a cello. Compare

any of his records with any of his predecessors. He towers over them all, including the highly overrated Van Rooy. Compare them with any of his successors, and the difference is even more marked. Only Ferdinand Franz seems to stand in his shadow. I predict that in time to come, Schorr's recordings in their genre will become what Caruso's are in the Italian tenor field: mementoes of a unique personality, a wonder of perfection coming once in a lifetime, and not likely to occur in ours.

Titta Ruffo

MUCH the same could be said about TITTA RUFFO (1877-1953), though he was not a perfectionist like Schorr. For one thing his career did not last as long as it should have and could have. His last electrical recordings—made when he was around 50—clearly show that by this time he was beyond his prime. But while that prime lasted, he was one of the greatest, even in a period which was in profuse in great baritones. Because of his stentorian voice and his strong personality, Ruffo stood out above all others of his time. This despite the fact that he was not as gifted a musician as were some others. Personally, I think it was not so much the force of his voice as its certain elusively noble quality, which cannot be described in words. Among his colleagues only Franci had that quality, but to a lesser degree. To me, Ruffo's voice was of a melancholic character, and, for this reason, I liked him best in roles of that nature: *Ernani*, *Tronatore*, *Ballo in Maschera*, *Forza del Destino*. In his recordings of arias from these, his voice has a dark and brooding quality. I care less for his *Figaro* recordings; they are too noisy and lacking in flexibility. One of his most characteristic recordings (which I chose for my radio commemoration) is Brogi's song *Visione Veneziana*, which reveals all the best qualities of his melancholy nobility.

(To be concluded next month)

Three Comic Operas

DONIZETTI: *Betty* (La Capanna Svizzera); Angelica Tuccari (Betty), Giuseppe Gentile (Daniele), Nestore Catalani (Max), Chorus & Orchestra of Societa del Quartetto, Rome, conducted by Giuseppe Morelli. Period LP SPL-585, \$5.95.

▲HERE is a comic opera by Donizetti which had great popularity in its day, being given in Italy, Spain, Russia, Cuba, New York and Buenos Aires. Its slim plot deals with a village girl who has no wish for marriage and a shy youth who succeeds in proving his worth to the maiden in the end. This performance derives from the *Teatro dell' Opera Comica di Roma* and is well sung. All three singers have pleasing voices with the soprano especially emerging as a talented performer. Musically, this opera is lightweight, but Donizetti has supplied

the lovers with some melodious airs—one of which, the soprano's "In questo «emplice modesto asile" is a fine example of the composer's florid writing. There's a lot of nonsense as the opera develops which musically is probably more effective in the theatre than from the recording, but with the complete libretto which comes with the disc the listener can appreciate its significance if not its quality. Those who liked Donizetti's *Il Campanello* (Cetra-Soria set) should find this comic opera equally diverting. The story is the composer's rewrite of a popular libretto by Scribe which formed the basis of Adam's popular score, *The Chalet*. —P.H.R.

DONIZETTI: *Don Pasquale* (complete); Sesto Bruscantini (Don Pasquale), Cesare Valetti (Ernesto), Alda Noni (Norina), Mario Borriello (Dr. Malatesta), Armando Benzi (Notary), Orchestra & Chorus of Radio Italiana, conducted by Mario Rossi. Cetra LP set 1242, 2 discs, \$11.90.

▲THIS, the third LP version of *Don Pasquale*, has the best singing from the young lovers, as well as the all-around best orchestral playing. The conductor, Mario Rossi, gets more life and verve in the music than Quadri did though Parodi did equal justice. Alda Noni is a charming Norina. She has the requisite sparkle and brilliance for Norina's music which was lacking in her Violetta (Remington set). Valetti, who has proved himself a valuable member of the Metropolitan Opera this year, is the best of the three Ernestos. His stylistic lyrical singing recalls the young Tito Schipa. Bruscantini is a capable Don Pasquale though not quite matching Corena. Borriello is also a capable artist but not up to Scipio Colombo vocally. If one has bought either of the other sets, there is no real reason for replacement. On the other hand, those who have not acquired a *Don Pasquale* are recommended to this performance. —P.H.R.

ROSSINI: *La Cambiale di Matrimonio* (Opera Buffa in 1 Act); Angelica Tuccari (Fanny), Giuseppe Gentile (Edward Milfort), Nestore Catalani (Mr. Slook), Giorgio Onest (Sir Tobias Mill), Grazia Ciferi (Clarina), Tito Dolciotti (Norton), Chorus and Orchestra of Societa del Quartetto, Rome, conducted by Armida Senatra. Period LP SPL-583, \$5.95.

▲AN equally engaging comic opera to the Donizetti one by the same company from the Rome *Teatro dell' Opera Comica*. This, the first of Rossini's operas, was a product of his eighteenth year (1810), written in a few days and polished off by the help of an operatic friend. The spontaneity and gaiety of the music reveals the talents of the composer, though some of the score is derivative. Despite an artificial plot which has to do with the efforts of one Mr. Slook—a Canadian merchant—to marry off on strictly commercial basis the daughter of his English business associate Rossini has contrived to devise telling music for each scene, including a comic duel one. I can recall Francis Toye's speaking about this opera years ago in Italy with enthusiasm. In his book on Rossini, Toye says its remarkable features "are its gaiety and high spirits." "Indeed,

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it may be doubted whether any previous opera, Mozart's *Entführung* and Cimarosa's *Matrimonio Segreto* not excepted, had ever before been characterized by such sparkle, such a wholly irresponsible sense of fun." Here, we encounter pre-echoes of the Barber, in the bass aria, "O, mio confondo col mappomondo," and in the trio, "Se questa mano." The reproduction has been realistically achieved.

—P.H.R.

Adventures In Sound

NATURE as well as mankind have devised sounds that can be both thrilling and annoying. Transferring such sounds to a record has been done in the past for background effects in movies and in stage productions. With hi-fi equipment, which is portable these days, a couple of recordings have been made to exploit such sounds in a way that can thrill as well as appall. From the famous Cook Laboratories at Stamford, Conn. comes a disc (LP—10", No. 1070) called "Rail Dynamics, Recorded on Rainy Nights Along the Tracks of the New York Central." This is hi-fi realism of a kind which is electrifying (no pun intended). "Technically, the transient content of steam, rails and couplings are a challenge to any reproducing system," says the notes on the envelope. "The acoustic perspective of trains that rush on and pass into the distance is a new experience [yea, verily], for it is a rare record which brings you the dynamic sound of a dynamic moving object." Some of the sound effects conveyed from this disc are fascinating, some shuddering. The distant effects are quite enchanting to one who, from boyhood, loved the sound of trains; the near ones with their overhead sounds might be employed to put the fear of God in one though mankind actually devised the effects. Here is another disc for testing hi-fi equipment; one to try on your friends if the family will permit. "Sounds of Our Times" is Dr. Cook's trademark—and a darn good one too; and this is one of his prize packages.

Frogs and Toads

"Voices of the Night: The Call of 34 Frogs and Toads of the United States and Canada" is the nature document sponsored by Cornell University Records (LP—12"). Professors P. P. Kellogg and A. A. Allen, pictured in seriously attentive operation with sound equipment and camera, are shown on the cover. This recording was originally issued on 78 rpm discs in 1948, but its LP version has been expended with some new frog and toad sounds. Hearing a bunch of frogs or toads in life can be deafening. But here we have a chance to hear them singularly in a variety of moods with accompanying night sounds which prove fascinating. They seem to have several different types of voices or croaks and they actually seem to make music on occasion. "The species of each singer, the month

when the recording was made, and the place are announced by Prof. Allen on the record." Just how this disc fits into the home is a moot question. Its value to the nature student cannot be refuted. The art of recording is not confined to music, and in cases like this it is serving mankind in a wonderful way. The lowly frog and toad commands our respect from this record; he is by no means just a raucous fellow that blasts the night, but an artist in nature in his own right.

Cook's Hi-Fi Records

In the musical category, "Sounds of Our Times", were the first to sponsor binaural disc recordings. Space as well as special equipment is required for binaural recordings. You cannot get satisfactory results in a small room. We have heard some of Dr. Cook's binaural recordings in a large studio and they were mighty impressive. All are hi-fi jobs that have to be played on hi-fi equipment to do them true justice. Stamped on the envelope of Cook's records is this assertion: "This is not a high fidelity record unless it is played on wide-range equipment." Hearing recently several of the Cook Lab. monaural recordings (I don't have the equipment for the binaural) I was startled by the highs which, on real hi-fi equipment, are really an experience—they seem to float upward and outwards, quite a different effect than we get in any other hi-fi recording. Frequency-wise these are extended in range far beyond any other commercial records and some pickups. Played on commercial equipment, they are not half as impressive as they are on true hi-fi. So much for Cook's engineering, which I suspect is as individual as it is fine. Among the discs, I heard was one containing Mozart's *Symphony in G minor, K. 550* by the Orchestral Society of Boston conducted by Willis Page (disc 2065). Mr. Page is a sound musician but his ideas on the great *G minor* are completely extrovert at this time. Another disc, containing Hindemith's communicative, but intellectually so, *Sonata for Four Hands, 1938* (it grows on one with repeated hearings) is nicely but not exceptionally performed by Josef and Greta Dichler on thirteen-foot pianos which are blessed with deeper and fuller tonal qualities in the bass regions, which Cook's recording technique exploits. Coupled with this work is a *Ballade for Flute* by the Swiss composer, Frank Martin, well played by Kamillo Wanansell with an unnamed orchestra conducted by Kurt Rapf (disc 1037). Martin has dreamed up some alluring chromaticism with dissonant effects and an impressionistic character which recalls Debussy, which one doesn't mind because Martin achieves some eerie effects all his own. He's a composer whose slender LP discography is well worth exploration. A really remarkable disc for big, full lower organ pedal tones but some recording upper registrations offers Bach's *Toccatina and Fugue in D minor*, Bach's *When Thou Art Near*, Boellmann's *Suite Gothique* and Dubois' *Toccatina* knowingly played by Reginald Fort on the new Aeolian-Skinner organ in Symphony Hall, Boston (1054).

J.N.

SACRED MUSIC

BACH: *Mass in B minor*; Elisabeth Schwartzkopf (soprano), Marga Hoeffgen (contralto), Nicolai Gedda (tenor), Heinz Rehfuss (bass), Chorus and Orchestra of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, Vienna, conducted by Herbert von Karajan. Angel LP set 3500-C, 3 discs, \$17.85.

▲OF the seven versions of this great work on LP to date, this and the Scherchen one issued by Westminster are the best. Both the Westminster and Angel sets are excellently recorded, though the overall sound in the former is brighter, with clearer-cut woodwinds and more distinct bass definition. Both versions have fine soloists and fine choruses. Both conductors have some original ideas about the music which, in my estimation, are musically cogent. Scherchen's quickening of the tempo in the second part of the *Kyrie*, allotted to two solo sopranos, is most effective with the return in the third section to a slower pace. Both conductors employ a staccato in the florid sections of the *Gloria* to which Scherchen gives more weight by adopting a slightly slower pace without sacrifice of movement. In the duet for soprano and tenor, *Domine Deus*, the Westminster soloists are clearer and the flute solo rightfully stands out better. Dermota seems more assured than Gedda in his part, which may be due to the recording. In the *Qui tollis*, the intonation and color of the flutes in the Scherchen performance is purer than in the von Karajan one. In the *Qui sedes*, the brighter oboe tone in the Westminster set provides the right contrast for the singer. It is difficult to be partial to either group of soloists. Schwartzkopf is most impressive in *Laudamus Te*, but so too is Emmy Loose. Marga Hoeffgen in the *Agnus Dei* provides a deeply moving experience which her counterpart in the Westminster set does not quite equal. Of the two basses, Alfred Poell has the flexibility to summon

a trill which Rehfuss lacks, but what a noble voice Rehfuss possesses.

The tenors at the start of the *Credo* in the Westminster set are not as effective as in the von Karajan. In the latter, the affirmation in the text is more impressive, though in the *Crucifixus* section von Karajan is less moving than Scherchen. The interpretative imagination of both conductors varies here and there, and one is hard put on first acquaintance to decide which is the more persuasive. In the wonderful *Sanctus*, Scherchen with the overall brightness of his orchestra greatly impresses, but here von Karajan also satisfies.

The balance between choir, orchestra and organ in both sets has been excellently achieved. I think the choice between this new set and the Westminster will be a personal one, governed largely by the listener's reaction to reproductive quality and, perhaps, to preference for the soloists.

—P.H.R.

FAURE: *Requiem, Op. 48*; Martha Angelici (soprano), Louis Noguerra (baritone), Les Chanteurs de Saint-Eustache and Orchestra conducted by André Cluytens. Angel LP 35019, \$5.95. **Same;** Patricia Beams (soprano), Theodor Uppman, (baritone) Roger Wagner Chorale and Concert Arts Orchestra conducted by Roger Wagner. Capitol P 8241, \$5.95.

▲TWO new Fauré *Requiem*s appearing simultaneously would hardly have been conceivable a decade or so ago; it is a sign of the times and today we take the event as a matter of course. The task of the reviewer is not made the easier by the fact that this brings the total of recordings now available up to four. One of the older sets can stand comparison with the new versions, though the other is outclassed on the grounds of its age. I would not recommend that owners of the Leibowitz performance (Oceanic 26) hurry to dispose of it in favor of either of these, for the choral work is good and spaciouly reproduced, while the soloists average best of the three sets.

For atmospheric recording, however, the palm must go to Angel, for one listens

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to it with the feeling that one is actually in a church. There is just enough echo—indeed one can gauge this at the choral pause in the *Agnus Dei*. For the most part Cluytens' tempi seem right, while those of Roger Wagner, though not actually very different, give the impression of a slight rush—notably in the serenely flowing melody introducing the *Agnus Dei*. In the *Sanctus* I thought Wagner had a little the better of it, especially at the thrilling trumpet entry. Another detail I liked in the Wagner performance was the insistence in the orchestral background of the first baritone solo. Point by point, thus, between the two choruses we are confronted with a Hobson's choice. And the soloists only complicate the dilemma. Miss Angelici, a prolific recording artist for whom I have the greatest admiration, is a little below her best in the *Pie Jesu*, while for her part Miss Beams sings sweetly but somewhat rigidly. No one has approached Malnoirey-Marseillac in the first and now very ancient and rare Victor recording made under Gustave Bret, but Nadine Sautereau under Leibowitz comes the closest. No-guerra is a good dependable baritone, but Uppman's sensitive performance is the surprise of the Capitol set. Demigny, under Leibowitz, presents a good compromise. And so any choice you make in this case is a good compromise.

—P.L.M.

CHERUBINI: *Requiem Mass in C Minor*; the Santa Cecilia Orchestra and Chorus conducted by Carlo Maria Giulini. Angel 35042, \$5.95 or (in economy package) \$4.95.

▲EVER since Toscanini performed this work some seasons back, we have been hopefully expecting that he would record it. Maybe he has, or will. In lieu of that eventuality we should give thanks for the present version, which is certainly an achievement of no mean dimensions. Giulini is no Toscanini, more's the pity, and there are moments when the score drags unduly. But he is thoroughly steeped in the finest operatic traditions, and this *Requiem* is, like the more famous one by Verdi, essentially a dramatic *March*, 1954

rather than a religious testament. The overall sound is a bit reverberant but no more so than one would expect. Both chorus and orchestra encompass the music's amazing emotional gamut with considerable, if not total, success. The memory of Toscanini's performance still burns brightly.

—J.L.

SCHMITT: *Psalm No. 47* (sung in French); Denise Duval (soprano), Chorale Elisabeth Brasseur, Maurice Duruflé, Georges Tessier (violin), Orchestra de la Société du Conservatoire conducted by Georges Tzipine. Angel LP 35020, \$5.95.

▲LAST month we had Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* with its wild emotional excitement. This month we have the Frenchman Florent Schmitt with equal frenzied emotion in his setting of Psalm 47—"O clap your hands all ye people, shout unto God with the voice of triumph. For the Lord most high is terrible; he is a great king over all the earth. He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under feet." One can understand how such a text would inspire a composer to emotional excitement, and Schmitt has conceived his musical setting in expansive proportions—a large orchestra with organ, considerable percussion, choir and solo soprano. Such forces have been employed to achieve impressive sonorities which are not always possessing of the clarity in recording that one might hear in the concert hall. Yet this recording is in many ways remarkable—its realism in power at least matches the expressive vigor and dramatic breadth of the music. Written in 1904, this work has been neglected because of its difficulties in performance, and it could never have been successfully recorded in the old days. Such grandiosity as we encounter here is not misapplied to a Biblical text, for the old boys who wrote ones like this left little else for a composer to do if he selected such a text. Since composer Schmitt bestowed his blessings on this performance, we can accept it as authoritative, hence the excitement was intended to be fully exploited.

—P.H.R.

REFICE: *Lilium Crucis*; *Preludio* from *La Samaritana*; *Le Stimmate* from *Trittico Francescano*; the Scarlatti Chorus and Orchestra di Napoli conducted by the composer. Colosseum set CLPS 1042/43, \$11.90.

▲IF you take Colosseum's claim of "Dynamic Balance Control" seriously you will be disappointed, because the recording is way short of current standards. On the other hand I suppose "Dynamic Balance Control" doesn't mean much, anyway. Strictly on its musical merits, this album is worth attention. Licinio Refice (b. 1885) is one of the more characteristic Italian composers of this century. His idiom is pervasively modal, with a suggestion of Puccini and Respighi obtruding. The *Lilium Crucis* is a *mysterium*, or mystery, which is to say oratorio, enlisting a narrator (Elena da Venezia) and two soloists representing Maria di Gesu (Luisa Vincenti) and the Blessed Virgin (Maria Teresa Massa Ferrero) along with a sizable choir and an orchestra with organ. The listener who knows the Honegger *Jeanne d'Arc au bûcher* will be especially taken with the vivid contrast of Refice's approach to the problems of the narrative oratorio. This is really quite an affecting work, at least on short acquaintance. The shorter orchestral pieces are less so, but they do whet one's appetite for the oratorios from which they are excerpted. It is a pity that Colosseum persists in paying so little attention to the matter of reproductive sound. As far as one can perceive, through a cloud of surface sputter, these performances are entirely adequate. —J.L.

MONTEVERDI

MONTEVERDI: *Il Ballo dell' Ingrate*; Emma Tegani (Amor), Claudia Carbi (Venus), Luigi Sgarro (Pluto), Orchestra da Camera di Milano, and Chorus, conducted by Ennio Gerelli. Vox LP PL-8090, \$5.95.

▲IN 1608, while at the court of the Duke of Mantua, Monteverdi was requested to

compose some music for the marriage festivities of the Duke's heir apparent, Don Francesco Gonzaga, to the Infanta Margherita di Savoia. Much of this music has been lost—the opera *Arianna*, for example, of which only the famous *Lamento* survives. The *mascherata*, or *balletto* (not an opera), *Il Ballo dell' Ingrate*, which moved its first listeners to tears, has survived, being included in the second part of the composer's Vol. 8—*Madrigali Amorosi*. The form of this work is said to have derived from the "new type of spectacle invented in France." Though making use of scenery, it was not an opera but a ballet diversion not far removed from a secular cantata. It was as much pantomime as it was related to the dance proper, and since the "ungrateful spirits" were to be regarded as saddened creatures in their condemnation, their dancing must have been restrained. The aria of one near the end—*Ahi, troppo e duro!*—is a most moving lament and not a dance.

The scene of the ballet is the entrance to Hades, where Amor and Venus have come to plead with Pluto to permit the *anime ingrata* to return for a short time to earth, so that their misery may be an object lesson to those ladies in the audience who are likewise cruel in love. Pluto consents, and the spirits appear though their liberty is short-lived. Their final appeal is to the ladies who have witnessed their misery. This type of allegorical entertainment belonged to a far different world than ours, yet the poetic restraint of Monteverdi's music remains as expressive today as it did in his time. Musically, this ballet is not far removed from *Orfeo*. There is a similar emotional intensity and harmonic beauty which gives significance to its somewhat artificial text. The phonograph is an ideal place for presentation of this work today, for to mount it as it was in the composer's time might provoke ridicule for its story with resultant unsympathetic reception to its music.

Admirers of Monteverdi's art will recall an earlier recording of Extracts from this ballet in the Nadia Boulanger set (Victor 496) in which the characters of Amor and Venus were omitted. The present per-

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formance evidently has been carefully prepared. The best of the singers is the bass Luigi Sgarro, whose dignity and restraint is in keeping with the original style. He is greatly preferable to Doda Conrad in the Boulanger set. The women are intelligent singers, though their vocal style belongs to a later date. Tegani's Amor is better sung than Carbi's Venus. The recording is quite intimate in sound, far from hi-fi but in keeping with its type of music. A word about the version used: this differs considerably from the Malipiero one in arrangements of the parts as well as in some of the musical tessitura. Originally, Monteverdi did not place a *sinfonia* at the beginning, but introduced Amor immediately. At the end of Scene I, as given in the notes, the first orchestral *sinfonia* was heard. There are other points of departure from the original score, especially in the ballet music, but none of this can be said to do serious damage to Monteverdi.

—P.H.R.

OPERA SPOTLIGHT

GOUNOD: *Faust*: Nicolai Gedda (Faust), Boris Christoff (Mephistopheles), Jean Borthayre (Valentine), Victoria de los Angeles (Marguerite), Martha Angelici (Siebel), Solange Michel (Martha), Robert Jeantet (Wagner), Chorus and Orchestra of the Paris Opera conducted by André Cluytens. RCA Victor LP set (also 45rpm), 4 discs, \$11.96.

▲IN the spring of 1949, RCA Victor released Beecham's performance of *Faust*, a set which remains in many ways unparalleled in the annals of operatic recording. Today, only in its reproductive quality does it take a backseat to this latest offering. When the Beecham set appeared, honoring the conductor's seventieth birthday, one of our leading critics—Virgil Thomson—echoed the sentiments and convictions of most of us when he said, "my impression from one hearing is that Sir Thomas has again made both

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musical and recording history, as he did back in 1936 with his recording of Mozart's *Magic Flute*." In no way does this new set realize musical and recording history, despite its origin and its inclusion of some better endowed vocalists. To my way of thinking, Victoria de los Angeles as Marguerite and Jean Borthayre as Valentine offer the finest singing. The former is vocally the loveliest Marguerite we have had to date in a complete recording. The latter, a gifted singer with an expressive vocal style, is a fine artist though lacking in some of the assurance which Roger Bourdin brought to the part in the Beecham set. Christoff, with his rich voice, seems to have been influenced by the late Chaliapin in his portrayal of Mephistopheles and not always for the best. Sometimes, he shouts, as in the "Calf of Gold," and again he omits high tones as in the "Serenade." Rico, in the Beecham set, made a wonderfully swagging Mephistopheles employing his voice always for true singing values.

Gedda, as Faust, has a fine lyric tenor voice but he, like Eugene Conley in the Columbia *Faust*, lacks subtlety and true feeling. But the voice is fresh and always under control if the style is not fully mature. Since Bjoerling has achieved the finest Faust singing these days, Victor seems to have missed an opportunity to make "record history" a second time in not engaging him for the role. Supporting singers and the chorus are competent.

The feature of this new set is its inclusion of the Walpurgis Night scene in the last act, which contains the ballet music. This scene which has been recently restored in performances at the Metropolitan, is effective in the theatre, but it adds very little of value to the opera in a recording, since the ballet music is of no great consequence. This new set offers a "complete" version of the opera as it is performed today, especially in Paris. It restores the aria of Valentine in the second act, which Beecham omitted. The scene between Marguerite and Siebel, after the Church Scene, however, is not given since it has long been regarded as

anticlimactic and ineffective musically. Various cuts that have become standard practise are also made.

Where this set falls down is in its orchestral playing. Cluytens, who has given us just reason to praise his artistic work in other recordings, seems uninspired in his direction here. There is little evidence that conveys imagination or penetration, such as we have from Beecham. Play the "Introduction," the entrance of Valentine in Act II and the "Calf of Gold" against Beecham's and one will realize immediately Beecham's superior interpretative and technical skills, and elsewhere, as in the Garden Scene and the Church Scene, one will discover revelations in orchestral subtleties and refinements which Cluytens does not realize. The orchestral playing here is routine and nothing more.

To return to the recording—this is extraordinarily fine operatic engineering with an overall good dynamic range and balance. But one does not forget nor dismiss the excellently recorded Columbia set, which is by no means outdated by this new one though it was made two years earlier. Those who already own the Beecham set will do well to listen carefully to this new one before considering replacement, for despite better recording technique and more music it is the Beecham set which offers the most musically and artistically.

—P.H.R.

STRAUSS: *Salome* (complete); Walburga Wegner (Salome), Georgine von Milinkovic (Herodias), Laszlo Szemere (Herod), Josef Metternich (Jokanaan), Waldemar Kmetz (Narraboth), others, Vienna Symphony Orchestra conducted by Rudolf Moralt. Columbia LP set SL-126, 2 discs, \$11.90.

▲ **HAD** they had psychoanalysts in Herod's time maybe Salome's desire for John the Baptist would have had a different ending, and Oscar Wilde and Richard Strauss would not have presented one of the most frustrating group of characters

to strut the stage in theater or opera house. What a man Strauss was with an orchestra! He could invent the most uncanny effects to create an illusion in the theater which gripped the imagination of his audience. Back in February 1951, Oceanic acquired a performance out of Germany with Christel Goltz as Salome and Josef Keilberth as conductor. Both soprano and conductor accounted for themselves in a manner which was praiseworthy. Unfortunately, the engineers were not in the same class, for the balance between singers and orchestra favored the former to the detriment of the main protagonist of the score—the orchestra. The recording here is as realistic as one could ask, with effects in the music like the executioner's descent into the cistern making one rub one's eyes at not seeing the event. Walburga Wegner is not vocally as appealing as Christel Goltz, but she lives the role in a telling manner. She doesn't let us forget the fact that Salome is a neurotic, a gal with an insatiable urge. Her Salome is a terrifying creature at times. She has all the intensity of Welitch without the vocal appeal or control. In the theater, vocal inequalities in a Salome are not disturbing if the singer can act. Mary Garden, they say, was a great Salome "despite her vocal inequalities." Wegner wobbles and goes off pitch, but she dominates any scene in which she is a part. Goltz sang better but did not project as powerful a personality. Metternich is an impressive Jokanaan, though his voice is not as rich as most we hear in the part. He's a better artist than Herrmann in the Oceanic set. Kmetz is a better singer than Szemere and should have been cast as Herod. But Szemere makes the most of his part, as also does von Milinkovic as Herodias. The others roles are satisfactorily sung. Moralt in the orchestral pit proves himself one of the fine operatic conductors of our times—they say that in Vienna he is a favorite with operagoers and I have no doubt that this is true judging from the way he handles this assignment. His orchestra is a luminous and radiant entity, thanks to the wonderful work of the engineers.

—J.N.

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Record Notes and Reviews

THERE IS IN SOULS a sympathy with sounds, and as the mind is pitched the ear is pleased with melting airs or martial, brisk or grave; some chord in unison with what we hear is touched within us, and the heart replies.

—William Cowper

Orchestra

BACH: *Four Suites for Orchestra*; Felix Prohaska conducting the Vienna State Opera Orchestra. Bach Guild LP set BG-530/31, \$11.90. Also played by the Hewitt Orchestra, Paris. Haydn Society LPs 90 and 91, \$5.95 each.

▲IN January, we reviewed the recordings of these works by Reiner and were favorably disposed toward them. Dr. Reiner had made a study of the scores and in their performance had made every effort to achieve results comparable to Bach's time, using a small ensemble with harpsichord. Now Dr. Prohaska, a knowledgeable student of the composer, brings us performances which are purported to be played according "to the practise of Bach's own time." Musical scholarship commands respect, though it does not always follow that music of enduring worth which comes down to us through the ages is always benefitted by the results of the musicologists' research. The French ensemble is said to have based its performances on authentic sources. Like Reiner, Hewitt employs an ensemble which includes the harpsichord, which was recognized as the backbone of the orchestra in Bach's time. In the Vienna orchestra,

the harpsichord is certainly obscure. As far as the values of "correct" timing are concerned, as advanced by Prohaska, in relation to the third and fourth suites, I cannot say that they impress me as much as Reiner's handling of the time. Hewitt's timing is often too fast, but he is closest to the Baroque style. His set is less successful on a basis of sound, as his upper strings have a harshness and the harpsichord has a metallic quality which does not blend too well with the ensemble; however his interpretations are more impressive in phrasing and in detailing.

While my admiration prevails for the Hewitt performances, the recording is far less effective than in the Reiner versions. Too, reverberation in the hall where Prohaska performed is more excessive than in Carnegie Hall where Reiner played with the result that bass lines are often diffused. Such a degree of reverberation in Bach's time would hardly have been evidenced unless these suites were being performed in a church. The one place where the well-meaning musicologist fails today is in the realization of reproductive qualities in relation to music of bygone times. Both Casals (Columbia) in *Suites Nos. 1 and 2* and Muenchinger (London) in *Suites 2 and 3* give performances in some ways more worthy of attention.

—P.H.R.

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BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 3 in E flat, Op. 55.* Angel LP 35000. **BEE-THOVEN:** *Symphony No. 7 in A, Op. 92.* Angel LP 35005. **BRAHMS:** *Symphony No. 1 in C minor, Op. 68.* Angel LP 35001. **SIBELIUS:** *Symphony No. 5 in E flat.* Angel LP 35002. Each \$5.95 or \$4.95. All by the Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Herbert von Karajan.

▲HERE is one conductor who, despite his prestige in Europe, has not visited America as yet. Probably something to do with the McCarran Act, which is a pity, for von Karajan is certainly a gifted conductor and a wonderful orchestral technician. After Furtwaengler's slow pacing of the opening and closing movements of the "Eroica" and his uncalled for fluctuations of tempi, von Karajan's performance is a pleasure to hear. In many ways, it recalls Weingartner's with its careful blend of lyricism and drama. In the long LP list of "Eroicas" this is one of the best, since it is excellently recorded. In comparison, the recording of the new *Seventh* is realistic but either dynamically over-refined or coarse in quality. Here, von Karajan is more prosaic and, for my taste, too deliberate in his tempi in the first two movements, and too fast in the finale.

In the Brahms *First*, which is realistically recorded but too weighted and obscure in the bass, von Karajan is too stolid—too *echt Deutsch* for my taste, and his capricious changes in tempi are annoying. The Sibelius *Fifth* fares better. It is an all around better recording, as good as any we have with fine tonal richness and some wonderful brass playing. The performance is an impressive one with imaginative treatment of the first and last movements which, though it may not please some, is nonetheless convincing. —P.H.R

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 5 in C Minor, Op. 67;* the Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam conducted by Erich Kleiber. London LL-912, \$5.95.

▲YET another *Fifth*, but extraordinary for the consistency with which Kleiber

makes the opening motto unfold in all of its mutations. No other conductor in my experience, not even Toscanini, toes the tempo line so relentlessly or so convincingly. The ultimate logic of Beethoven's counterpoint was never so glowingly revealed. If you can bear an umpteenth hearing of this overly familiar masterpiece, listen and see if you don't agree. The performance otherwise is superb, the sound is sometimes a trifle strident but beautifully balanced. —J.L.

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 6 in F, Op. 68 (Pastorale);* the Vienna Symphony Orchestra conducted by Willem van Otterloo. Epic LC-3011, \$5.95.

▲ONLY eleven microgroove recordings of the *Pastorale* we've available before this one came along, including two by Toscanini and one each by Walter, Weingartner and Scherchen among others. There was little excuse, on the face of it, for this dozenth version. The performance is straightforward and the recording first-class, but when you have said that you have said all there is to say, and it does not constitute any grounds for replacing whatever disc you happen to own. Unless you are unreasonably excited by lots of bass, that is, in which case the Epic-cure is just what the doctor ordered. —J.L.

COPLAND: *Billy the Kid;* **SCHUMAN:** *Underlow;* Ballet Theatre Orchestra conducted by Joseph Levine. Capitol LP disc P-8238, \$5.72.

▲VIBRANT, resonant sound is a distinguished feature of this new disc. Detail is good, while there is a pleasant illusion of spaciousness. Surfaces are a mite noisy, however. Two modern classics of the dance theater are presented here practically as they are heard in actual performance. That means that in *Billy the Kid*, one gets all the music Bernstein offered in his Victor recording plus the exquisite *Waltz* of Billy and his sweetheart and some of the fine bridgework that holds the set pieces together. The performance by Levine and the worthy instrumentalists called the Ballet Theatre

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Orchestra (BT's orchestra never played so well in the theater) are clean, precise; and the idiom of each work is well understood. They, unfortunately, lack excitement and the kind of theatrical rhetoric that can be found in the Bernstein version and in the poor recording of Schuman's electric performance of his *Undertow* on a Mercury LP. It is good to have this coupling of two such splendid American theater works, and especially in such servicable recordings; but one can experience the full impact of this music only by purchasing two discs.

—C.J.L.

BRAHMS: *Symphony No. 2 in D, Op. 73*; the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Carl Schuricht. London LL-867, \$5.95.

▲CARESSING Brahms is a specialty of Schuricht, and those who like their *Gemuelllichkeit* laid on heavy will find much to admire in this loving, leisurely performance. Of the many current versions I am inclined to prefer Toscanini's if only because I keep hearing new things in it. But the venerable Schuricht is beyond approach in the traditional school. The recording is typical of London's best imports.

—J.L.

GRIEG: *Lyric Suite*; **REESEN:** *Himmerland*; the Danish State Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted respectively by Eric Tuxen and Emil Reesen. London LS-849, \$4.95.

▲WHO ever would have predicted the continuing vogue of the mostly innocuous Scandinavian repertory? The *Lyric Suite*—a far cry from Alban Berg's work of the same title—originally was drawn from the ten sets of *Lyric Pieces* by Anton Seidl, specifically from *Book V, Op. 54*. The composer subsequently went over Seidl's score and made a number of changes, so that the finished product might as well be regarded as original Grieg. It is all very pretty and painless. So is *Himmerland*, subtitled *A Danish Rhapsody*, which is a sort of travelogue through the famous forest of Rold-Skov March, 1954

in Northern Jutland. Neither of these works quite takes flight, really, but both of them are full of nice musical technicolor. The performances seem to be first class and the sound is excellent.

—J.L.

HANDEL: *Concerto Grosso No. 11 in A, Op. 6, No. 11; Concerto Grosso No. 12 in B minor, Op. 6, No. 12*; Boyd Neel conducting the Boyd Neel String Orchestra. London 10" LP LS-870, \$4.95.

▲AT long last, Mr. Neel completes the 12 Concerti Grossi of Handel in recording which matches in every way the fine work that he and London's engineers accomplished in the other five discs containing the first ten. While these last two concertos have not the inspiration of the earlier ones, they do offer an ingratiating and majestic type of improvisatory music-making that has been largely lost in our time. That precision, tonal purity and polish, which are essential to these works, is achieved by Mr. Neel and his chamber orchestra. In listening to these compositions the listener should focus his attention on the *concertino*, the three solo instruments—two violins and a cello—which are pitted against the main body of the strings. London should honor the fine work of Mr. Neel by re-issuing the ten concerti grossi in an album, perhaps with more extensive notes than provided on the different discs, since this is a completed recording project of which it can be justly proud.

—P.H.R.

HAYDN: *Symphony No. 96 in D; Symphony No. 97 in C*; Eduard van Beinum conducting the Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam. London LP LL-854, \$5.95.

HAYDN: *Symphony No. 44 in E minor (Trauer) Symphony No. 48 in C (Maria Theresa)*; Mogens Woldike conducting the Danish State Radio Symphony Orchestra. London LP LL-844, \$5.95.

▲IT is good to have these recordings by van Beinum of two of Haydn's famous

London group. Surely, this conductor has developed one of the finest string sections of any orchestra on the Continent, and the strings in these two symphonies play an important role. The reproduction of both works is exceptionally fine, with not too much reverberation in the bass, which always is to the good in Haydn. Scherchen has recorded both these symphonies and, in the case of *No. 97*, gives a fine performance. But the orchestral playing is more polished here, and there is a lightness and grace which is most appealing. Scherchen's version of *No. 86* is one of his best performances, but van Beinum's is equally as well played with a more luminous sheen and elegance.

The Danish performances of two earlier symphonies are also excellently performed. Woldike employs a chamber-sized orchestra which has an intimacy in sound belonging rightly to these earlier works. The only other recording of *No. 48*, written for a visit of the Empress Maria Theresa to Esterházy, is poorly recorded and rather stiffly played. Here, we have realistic recording and a performance that has grace and ceremonious pomp. Haydn employed the trumpets for this symphony and the conductor realizes their importance in the score. The length of the work seems to have prevented observance of repeats which, in my estimation, is to the good. The fine *Trauersymphonie*, which had to await LP to resurrect it from unjust neglect, gains its sobriquet from its beautiful *Adagio* which Haydn wished performed at his own funeral. Its "gentle expression of grief" is not quite as tellingly brought out as in the performance by Scherchen (July 1953), though it is exquisitely phrased and played with wonderful poise. Some may feel that this more intimate sounding rendition is in keeping with Haydn's intentions, but the richer orchestral sound in the Scherchen recording certainly serves the music's repressed sublimity tellingly. The outer movements here seem at variance with the grave minuet and the long slow movement, yet without their impetus the work would probably seem unfinished, though

the short finale seems more a concession to tradition than anything else. This disc is highly recommended to all Haydn enthusiasts. —P.H.R.

HINDEMITH: *Mathis der Maler; Concert Music for Strings and Brass, Op. 50*; the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Columbia ML-4816, \$5.95.

▲ORMANDY'S shellac version of the *Mathis* was, to these ears, the most effective of the hitherto available recordings, although some, with ample grounds, have preferred that one made under the composer. Cantelli's was absorbing right up to the peroration, but fell apart completely with the attenuation of the great crashing chords at the end. This latest recording is not brand new (it was made in 1952) but it is vastly superior to all others reproductively. Musically, I find it in some respects less edifying than Ormandy's older interpretation but still, on the whole, the most nearly successful of all. The performance is superb, except for a tragedy in the brass at the climax of the *Angelic Concert* section. The *Concert Music* is a fine work and it is played to perfection by the incomparable Philadelphia virtuosos. Again the sound is stunningly realistic. —J.L.

IPPOLITOV-IVANOV: *Caucasian Sketches*; **BORODIN:** *Polotsian Dances from Prince Igor*; *In the Steppes of Central Asia*; the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York conducted by Dimitri Mitropoulos. Columbia ML-4815, \$5.95.

▲YOU might wonder why Mitropoulos would bother with the *Caucasian Sketches*. Well, listen and you will hear why. He invests this rather superficial score with so much vitality that it actually seems to be, for the moment, worth every moment of the listening time. The third section, "In the Mosque," sounds for all the world as if it were a castaway section of Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique* (which was given its *première* one season earlier). The work otherwise is quite original. The

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Borodin pieces have been done just as well as this elsewhere, notably by Stokowski, but those who don't happen to own them are warmly advised to sample this excellently compatible coupling. The Philharmonic plays exceedingly well, as it can when it is in the mood, and the engineering is first class. —J.L.

McDONALD: *Children's Symphony; Builders of America*; respectively the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Columbia Chamber Orchestra and Chorus conducted by the composer; Claude Rains (narrator) Columbia ML-2220, \$4.00.

▲THE busy manager of the Philadelphia Orchestra, Harl McDonald, still finds time to compose. His *Builders of America* is a cantata based on a poem of the same title by Edward Shenton, the text of which is in turn woven largely out of the actual words of Lincoln and Washington. The *Children's Symphony* is a kind of demonstration piece in which familiar folk tunes are put through academic hoops. Both works are simple and direct in their appeal, and quite well constructed. Rains delivers the narration in appropriately lofty fashion. The recordings are clean. —J.L.

MODERN FRENCH MUSIC: *Pastorale d'Elé (Honegger)*, *Le boeuf sur le toit (Milhaud)*, *Three Gymnopédies (Satie)*, and *Le Tombeau de Couperin (Ravel)*; the Concert Arts Orchestra conducted by Vladimir Golschmann. Capitol P-8244, \$5.72.

▲ALTOGETHER a disappointment. It is good to have all of these items on one disc, of course, and particularly a blessing to have the *Gymnopédies* at last on microgroove (the No. 2 was orchestrated for the first time, by Richard Jones, just for this recording). But the Milhaud and the Ravel already have been coupled on a 10-inch Columbia in much better performances under Mitropoulos, and the Honegger hardly is a fitting temperamental partner for any of the others. Golschmann's ensemble plays rather dully throughout. The sound is spacious. —J.L.

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MOUSSORGSKY-RAVEL: *Pictures at an Exhibition*; **SMETANA:** *The Moldau*; **DVORAK:** *Rhapsody No. 3 in A Flat*; the Hague Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Antal Dorati. Epic LC-3015, \$5.95.

▲LIKE most Epic releases this one is admissible solely for its wonderful sonic qualities. The performances are no better than several currently available, although the Dvorak is a microgroove premiere. Nor is the multiple coupling especially interesting, unless you happen to have neither of the two principal works in your collection. But oh, those climaxes! And I have never heard the lower strings of any orchestra glow so resplendently, except on other Epic surfaces. —J.L.

MOZART: *Divertimento in D, K.334*; Vienna State Opera Orchestra conducted by Felix Prohaska with Jan Tomasow (violin). Vanguard LP disc \$5.95.

▲THIS realistic recording offers an appealing warmth of sound and unusual fidelity to detail. And the performance is a dream for seriousness of purpose and ease of manner. The music is utterly charming; the theme and variations one of the prime examples of Mozart's astounding variety of invention. This divertimento is, of course, in six movements; that was the prevailing style in the 18th century. There is an allegro, an andante (usually a theme and variations), a minuet, an adagio, another minuet, and a finale (more often than not a rondo). An early version of this music (a splendid recording by the Vienna Octet on a London LP) did not use the additional strings that Prohaska's version calls for. Both are effective in their own ways. Attention must be called to the lively, precise playing of the solo violin passages by Jan Tomasow (known to most music lovers as the concertmaster of the Little Orchestra). His work and the contribution of the excellent Viennese ensemble under Prohaska make this one of the appealing discs in the Mozart LP catalogue. —C.J.L.

SCHUMANN: *Symphony No. 2 in C, Op. 61*; the Cleveland Orchestra conducted by George Szell. Columbia ML-4817, \$5.95.

▲SZELL is one of our most knowing conductors. Schumann has always been a special favorite of his; why, it is difficult to say, because no composer would seem farther distant from his temperament. The *Second Symphony* herewith gets every ounce of Szell's skill, and the Clevelanders play like men possessed. But I am not sure that the virtuosic treatment is the most appropriate for this music. The *Scherzo* fairly zooms instead of just skimming along. I am inclined to favor the Stokowski performance for its slightly less surcharged suppleness. Still, this one is a knockout for orchestral precision. And the sound is excellent. —J.L.

STRAUSS, R. *Don Quixote*; Gregor Piatigorsky (cello) and the Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Charles Munch. RCA Victor LM-1781, \$5.72.

▲THE prospect of Toscanini's performance need not deter anyone from making a choice between this one and last month's London version by Krauss-Fournier. In the first place I expect it will be some time before Victor releases the Toscanini tapes because no firm likes to pit its own artists against each other. Then again, the Maestro himself may not approve his handiwork. So that the field is narrowed to the most recent discs, the dated Decca and Entré versions being eliminated on grounds of age and sundry other qualifications. The short of it is that Krauss, master Straussian that he is, gives a much better-rounded idea of the whole than does Munch, although the Victor mike placement gives much more voice and hence much more eloquence to the soloist. At the big shed in Tanglewood last summer, where I heard the present principals go through the same music, the overall performance was quite erratic. In this recording, made a few weeks later in Boston, Munch had not yet smoothed out his conception into anything more than a plangent

ritornel for a cello showpiece. From that point of view the Victor disc is the preferred one; there is more lush sound on it than there is on the London surfaces, which is to say infinitely more cello, at the expense of proprietous proportion. In other words, if you agree with Munch that *Don Quixote* is a vehicle, the Boston performance is the preferred. And the reproduction is New Orthophonic at its vivid best. If you don't agree with Munch, then the London record is your buy. —J.L.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Romeo and Juliet—Fantasy Overture; Francesca da Rimini, Op. 32*; the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra conducted by Vladimir Golschmann. Capitol P-8225, \$5.72.

▲AFTER the Franck *D Minor* that Golschmann turned in a few months back, one approached this second of his Capitol releases with a certain trepidation. The apprehensions were unfounded, happily. Both of these performances are quite straightforward, and both are spaciouly recorded. There are so many competitive versions in divers couplings that an extended comparison would be pointless. Suffice is to say that none I have heard is any better on the whole, although Stokowski's and Toscanini's are both more exciting. —J.L.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 64*; Leopold Stokowski and his Orchestra. RCA Victor LP LM-1780, \$3.99.

▲AT la Casa Victor, no one seems to get quite the recorded sound that Stokowski does. Employing an orchestra including some of the best solo players of our time, he gets results which are soundwise wonderful. I doubt that any other recording of this symphony has such beauty of tone, such blending of timbres, in its slow movement as here. Everything floats; even the strings seem to soar but not skyward, rather all around us. One thinks of a halo, but halos have a way of getting misplaced and Stokowski's halo or aura, what you will, never loses its

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perspective. Stokowski has his way with Tchaikovsky, which is not everybody's way—his rubati may not please those who like music to flow uninterruptedly, but there are two schools of thoughts on how Tchaikovsky should be played. In the opening movement Stokowski is free in his use of rubati, elsewhere he is more convincing in its use as in the second movement where he makes poetry in sound that surely would have pleased the composer. The waltz is beautifully handled and the finale has plenty of vitality if some individual ideas of the conductor intrude. Anyone interested in fine reproduction will be swayed toward this disc. Others, like some of the staff of this periodical, will turn elsewhere for their performance of the *Fifth*—to Fricsay for his lyrical feeling or to Kletzki for his dramatic impact. —J.N.

Concerto

BEETHOVEN: *Concerto No. 5 in E flat, Op. 73 (Emperor)*; Wilhelm Backhaus (piano) with Clemens Krauss conducting the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. London LP LL-879, \$5.95.

▲**BACKHAUS**, at seventy, reminds us that after an artist has lived with a great work like this he either acquires an affection for it or else leaves the listener with the feeling that he plays it because it is expected of him. Backhaus definitely has an affection for this concerto, an affection that has given him just cause to linger slightly over some phrases though without distorting them. He often shapes melodies as from his heart, and these are tinged with a gentle, persuasive romanticism which relieves the work from being merely a virtuosic *tour de force*. There is power, vivacity and even boldness in this performance, and there is an ingratiating touch that lends much to the lyrical passages of the score. Giesekeing achieves some of this but he did not have the depth of feeling of Backhaus. Curzon gave us a fine performance earlier on a London

disc, not well recorded, but it lacked the personal touches which Backhaus imparts. One could go down the line—the Schnabel-Stock performance is a favorite of mine, but no other version has the wonderful fidelity in reproduction which this new one has. The piano tone is exceptionally beautiful, the orchestral sound rich and full. The balance favors the solo instrument but not to the detriment of the orchestra, which is clearly outlined at all times. Much of this is due to Krauss, whose orchestral direction is splendid and whose feeling for the music conveys a rapport with the pianist which is unusual. —P.H.R.

CHOPIN: *Concerto No. 1 in E minor, Op. 11*; Alexander Uninsky (piano) with Hague Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Willem van Otterloo. Epic LP disc LC-3012, \$5.95.

▲**HEAVY** bass and an odd balance between piano (quite close) and orchestra (far away) cannot quite obliterate the best performance of Chopin's lyrical *E minor Concerto* we have had since Rubinstein and Barbirolli recorded it 20 years ago. This is easily the best playing your reviewer has ever heard from Uninsky. Precise, stylish, affectionate, it removes almost all of the virtuosic barnacles that have long clung (by association) to this work. Otterloo's cooperation is right in the spirit, and the result is some delicious music making. —C.J.L.

LISZT: *Concerto No. 1 in E flat; Concerto No. 2 in A*; Orazio Frugoni (piano) with Hans Swarowsky and the Pro Musica Symphony, Vienna. Vox LP 8390, \$5.95.

LISZT: *Piano Concerto in E flat*; **SAINT-SAENS:** *Concerto No. 2 in G minor*; Emil Gilels (piano) with Kiril Kondrashin and the State Orchestra of the USSR. Vanguard LP 6015, \$5.95.

▲**TWO** quite different approaches to Liszt's music but both equally cogent. Gilels is recognized in Russia and elsewhere in Europe as a great pianist, which indeed he is. And Frugoni, the Swiss, has

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an enviable reputation. He has progressed considerably in the past two years. There is both refinement and grandeur in his playing and fine control. Gilels, on the other hand, has a grasp of romantic poetry which is quite unlike any other player we hear today. He favors considerable *rubati*, which in the case of the Saint-Saens' first movement tends to make the movement seem protracted, though the poetic passages are exquisitely played. His technique is well-nigh impeccable but he does not confirm the sparkle of the scherzo, though he makes music as only an accomplished and exceptionally gifted musician can do. His Liszt is without bombast, its poetry is skillfully handled but its dramatic emphasis is not quite big enough. Frugoni is better in the latter; his performances of the *E flat*, as well as the *A major*, is objective, with boldness in drama and sensitivity in poetic passages. The recording in the Vox disc is excellent, well balanced and realistic. But I favor the Farnardi performances on Westminster since Scherchen provides more expressive orchestral playing than Swarowsky, who tends to be perfunctory on occasion and less concerned with refinement in phrasing. Kondrashin commands respect for his fine support of Gilels, though here the orchestral detail is often submerged and not as clear as one would like. However, the piano tone is exceptionally fine and there is a satisfactory if not startling realism in the Russian-made recording. —P.H.R.

MEDELSSOHN: *Violin Concerto in E Minor*; **BRUCH:** *Violin Concerto No. 1 in G Minor*; Nathan Milstein (violin) and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra conducted by William Steinberg. Capitol P-8243, \$5.72.

▲NOW here is a bargain, especially if you don't happen to own either of these works. For my taste Milstein plays more prettily than any violinist of our day; I therefore prefer his performances of both concerti to any one else's. That is an entirely subjective attitude, however. Each to his own fiddler, providing the next one can play all of the notes as

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flawlessly as Milstein can. The point is that nobody else offers both of these masterworks on one disc, and that must be accounted a persuasive factor. The orchestral support is glistening in either case, and the sound is up to Capitol's best.

—J.L.

PROKOFIEV ALBUM: *Concerto No. 3 in C*; *Visions Fugitives*; *Toccata in D Minor*; Samson Francois (piano) and the orchestra of the *Société des Concerts du Conservatoire* conducted by André Cluytens. Angel 35045, \$5.95 or \$4.95.

▲THE memory of the Kapell and Mitropoulos performances of the major work is not dispelled by this musicianly but uninspired reading. The coupling, however, is worth the attention of the price-conscious. And the recording is superior to that in the earlier versions. The solo pieces are beautifully done.

—J.L.

SCHUMANN: *Concerto in A minor, Op. 54*; Clara Haskil (piano) with Hague Philharmonic Orchestra. **LISZT:** *Concerto No. 1 in E flat*; Cor de Groot (piano) with Radio Philharmonic Orchestra. Both conducted by Willem von Otterloo. Epic LP disc LC-3020, \$5.95.

▲AGGRESSIVELY heavy is the bass in this recording, somewhat piercing the highs. Not much middle. Piano close, orchestra distant. This is the sonic report of Epic's unsatisfactory engineering for this disc. It does, however, contain a winning, limpid performance by Clara Haskil that restores to Schumann's beautiful but oh-so-tired concerto a welcome feeling of spontaneity. No *affetuoso* playing here, thank heaven. The orchestral accompaniment is also efficient. This version ranks very close to the magical Lipatti performance, which is also afflicted by uneven engineering.

Cor de Groot gives a musical performance of Liszt's flamboyant *E flat concerto* that is marked by tidiness and style. But there is not enough fun in it and little excitement. The conductor does not help matters either by his somewhat heavy assistance. The Arrau-Ormandy per-

formance on a Columbia LP gives a better idea of this music's qualities. —C.J.L.

Chamber Music

LOCATELLI: *Sonata in D*; **FRESCO-BALDI:** *Toccata*; **BOCCHERINI:** *Sonata in A*; Antonio Janigro (cello) and Eugenio Bagnoli (piano). Westminster WL-5243, \$5.95.

▲MORE and more the recording companies are pushing back the horizons of the repertory. This is a kind of retrogression that is not only pardonable but praiseworthy, provided the revived music would warrant our attentions. Certainly the Locatelli and Frescobaldi works of this group are entirely worthy of modern attentions, for reasons that will be obvious at once to a cellist and no less edifying, or pleasurable, to a lay listener. The sound is wonderfully close and clear. I venture to say that Janigro has not been heard to such splendid advantage on any of his previous Westminster discs, which is the most effusive compliment I could imagine. I mean no denigration of the little Boccherini piece, by the way, in extolling the loveliness of its companions. It is simply that his works already are well represented and it is about time to concede that when you have heard one of them you have heard them all.

—J.L.

MOZART: *Trios No. 1 in G, K. 496* and *No. 2 in B Flat, K. 502*; Paul Badura-Skoda (piano), Jean Fournier (violin) and Antonio Janigro (cello). Westminster WL-5242, \$5.95.

▲EXQUISITE is the word for these performances (two more, the *K.254* and *K. 564*, are due in May) and the presence is eminently realistic. As with Haydn's two dozen or so works in this form, the Mozart Trios are really piano sonatas with accompaniment. But each of them is so characteristically poised that the

illusion of ensemble balance is complete, and the performing artists in this recital never once permit their individually strong personalities to obtrude. Competitive versions automatically are obsolete.

—J.L.

16th and 17th CENTURY LUTE MUSIC: Michel Podolski (lute). Period SPL-577, \$5.95.

▲THE sound is close-up and clear, very likely the best that Period ever has offered. The young Belgian artist who makes his LP debut here is acknowledged to be the most accomplished lutenist before the public. His selections from the tablatures of nine early composers—only Dowland among them is a familiar name—are uniformly rewarding. I am averse to these recital discs as a rule, but I must say that no such novelty of recent seasons has proved so compelling. The granddaddy of all stringed instruments has a lovely tone, and this distinguished *luter* (if that old title still is applied) makes his all but sing, in the best traditions of minstrelsy as they have come down to us. The otherwise exhaustive program notes do not say how many strings there are on Podolski's lute; some of these long-necked monsters had as many as 27! Whatever his equipment, this gifted musician is due the highest praise for the flawless intonation that distinguishes his work. We have no comparative standards to speak of, but surely his virtuosity speaks for itself. An utterly charming disc, any way you look at it.

—J.L.

WOLF: *Italian Serenade; Quartet in D minor*; New Music Quartet. Columbia ML 4821, \$5.95.

▲PERHAPS the whole tragedy of Hugo Wolf's tempestuous life may be read in his one completed string quartet, begun when he was eighteen, worked over intermittently for the next six years, and never performed until nineteen days before his physical death—some six years after his mental collapse. The motto from Goethe's *Faust* which gives the work a kind of title, "Entbehren sollst du,

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sollst entbehren"—the theme of renunciation, was dominant in his life. The great influences are in the music too, his admiration for Wagner in many thematic and harmonic ideas, and for Beethoven in the obvious formal relationship to that master's late quartets. This is music of terrific drive and intensity, long dismissed as unplayable, certainly too extended and too overpowering to make an easy popular success. Perhaps if the composer could have revised and cut his score he might have gotten attention for it. On the other hand, had he done this his quartet would have been less of a document, less a summing up of what he stood for.

The New Music Quartet, discovering this neglected work, has set out to prove not only that it can be played, but that it is in its way a masterpiece. Beyond any question, given so eloquent a performance, it belongs in the repertoire. From the opening of the introduction to the last note of the finale, there is an earnestness and a conviction about the playing that demands attention. One can only wonder at the mastery with which the famous ineptitudes in Wolf's writing for the instruments have been overcome. Wolfians must be grateful for this powerful and moving experience. As a curtain-raiser, the Quartet plays with great penetration and appealing tone the familiar *Italian Serenade*, giving it the most lighthearted performance since the memorable pre-war Budapest Quartet disc. —P.L.M.

Keyboard

BACH: *Goldberg Variations*; Joerg Demus (piano). Westminster LP WL-5241, \$5.95.

▲THE title of this work was actually *Aria with 30 Variations*, but it has become known as the *Goldberg Variations* after the famous pupil for whom Bach wrote this composition. It was the ailing Count Kayserling who commissioned Bach to write this work and it was Goldberg who

was invited again and again to play it for the Count, who originally asked Bach to compose "a work sufficiently voluminous and interesting to divert his mind during his long sleepless nights." What a hardy soul that Count must have been, for as glorious as this work is, it is still an exacting one with contrapuntal writing which asks for the most attentive listening to appreciate its many wonders. What a strong anodyne to relieve acute neuralgia! Tovey writes at length about this music in his *Essays in Musical Analysis: Chamber Music*. Tovey loved these variations and often played them in public on the piano. There is a delightful tale about

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one of his performances. It seems that he was invited to perform a Beethoven concerto with Sir Henry Wood and his "Prom Concert Orchestra," where no encores were ever permitted. Tovey got such a round of applause for his performance of the concerto that Wood pushed him out on the platform alone to take a bow. The audience responded with an ovation which prompted Tovey to return to the piano, where he promptly sat down and performed the *Goldberg Variations* as an encore. This is probably the only case in which such a lengthy work was used as an encore by a pianist.

While this composition fares best on the harpsichord, it has been performed by many great Bach players on the piano. And, as there are probably as many listeners who prefer the modern instrument to the old one, a piano recording of this work is in keeping with our times. Tureck played it for *Allegro* (a 2-disc set) but the recording was hardly an asset to her artistry. Demus fares better; the piano tone is realistic here and dynamically well exploited in the recording. Demus plays with intelligence, fine control and clarity of line and detail. In many ways, he recalls the late Harold Samuel, particularly with his mellowness and delicacy, though he does not have the degree of intensity where necessary that Samuel summoned. Kirkpatrick and Landowska hold the listener's attention better by virtue of their more intensified artistry. The former is far better recorded.

—P.H.R.

BRAHMS: *Klaviersluecke, Op. 79, 118 and 119* (Angel 35027); *Klaviersluecke, Op. 76 and Fantasien, Op. 116*; Walter Gieseeking (piano) (Angel 35028). \$5.95 each, or \$4.95.

▲EXCEPT for a one-disc Rubinstein recital that may be forthcoming this spring, it is a lamentable fact that the present omnibus release constitutes the most nearly satisfactory representation of the piano music of Brahms in the catalogues. I say it is lamentable because much of Gieseeking's playing is downright sloppy. In all fairness, however,

much of it is magnificent. The lone *Ballade* from *Op. 118* is a sample of the worst; the *A Major Intermezzo* that immediately precedes it is one of the best. It is that kind of a recital; one moment you are transported and the next you are shocked by a handful of wrong notes. The last two *Fantasien* are nothing short of divine. So are the final pair from *Op. 118*: the *Romance in F*, with its obeisance to Scarlatti, and the *Intermezzo in E Flat Minor*, with its foreboding hint of the *Dies Irae*, I don't know. Perhaps Brahms is one composer whose piano music does not demand exactitude for the maximum communication. Since almost nobody ever does play it without mangling an occasional passage, maybe we should be properly grateful for small favors and accept this double issue as the best we are apt to be getting for a long while. But I still want to hear the Rubinstein. The sound on these Gieseeking discs is not up to Angel's highest standards. There are many muddy moments. —J.L.

JANACEK: *On an Overgrown Path; Sonata, October 1, 1905; In the Threshing House*. Rudolf Firkusny (piano). Columbia LP ML-4740, \$5.45.

▲HERE is another notable and welcome addition to the Janacek discography, beautifully performed and recorded. Has any other composer so successfully come into his own through the good offices of microgroove? His works were unknown to our concert and recital repertoires five years ago. Today, a century after his birth and two decades after his death, this unique Moravian figure suddenly has become a name to be conjured with, as the quaint saying goes. His LP representation is impressive. Those who may not be familiar with any of the splendid recent samplings of Janacek's art are commended in particular to the Urania version of his *Sinfonietta* or the Westminster performance of his *Taras Bulba*. This latest offering explores yet another aspect of his singular genius. The cycle entitled *On an Overgrown Path* consists of 15 pieces, all written between

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1902 and 1908, which evoke the rustic joys of his otherwise unhappy childhood. The so-called *Workman's Sonata* is a kind of memorial for a laborer who died in a nationalist demonstration on the date which is an integral part of the title; only two movements of the work are preserved, both deeply felt and both cast in an elegaic B minor. The last-listed cycle, sometimes translated simply *In the Mist*, is another retrospective souvenir of Janacek's youth. It dates from 1912, when the composer was in his late fifties. In all of this music there is a stylistic individuality that is at once arresting and edifying. The idiom is a characteristic amalgam of identifiably ethnic features and highly personal touches, not without a Schumannesque quality and astonishingly alert to the contemporary influence of Satie and Debussy alike. If there is an unevenness in it there is a distinctive flavor, too, and even sublimity at a few points. Mr. Firkusny plays with a dedication befitting the missionary nature of his effort. There will be many converts.

—J.L.

NIELSEN: *Chaconne, Op. 32*; **LISZT:** *Liebestraum No. 3* and *La Campanella*; France Ellegaard (piano). London LD-9065, \$2.95.

▲WHATEVER possessed the powers that-be to couple a superb performance of a fine modern work with such routine run-throughs of overplayed standard repertory, the fact remains that the Nielsen side of this disc is worth the price of the whole. The *Chaconne* was his first major work for the keyboard, dating from 1916. It consists of a theme and twenty variations, every one of them imaginative and pianistic in the extreme. The sound is adequate, but not as clear as it might be along the bottom. It is hard to believe that the performing artist approved the Liszt tapes. Indeed, it is hard to believe that the same pianist plays them. The one is insipid; the other is lackluster to say the least. But the Nielsen, at least, is set forth admirably, and pianists are commended to it without reservation.

—J.L.

LISZT: *Sonata in B minor*; *Valse Impromptu*; *Mephisto Waltz*; Edith Farnardi (piano). Westminster LP WL-5266, \$5.95.

LISZT: *Sonata in B minor*; *Concerto No. 2 in A*; Witold Malcuzyński with (in concerto) Walter Süsskind and the Philharmonia Orchestra. Angel LP 35031, \$5.95.

▲REPRODUCTIVE quality will probably govern listeners' choice between these issues of the *Sonata*. The Westminster piano tone is bright and clear while the Angel one is more mellow and less brilliant. Both pianists are equally effective in the poetic sections of the work. In the more dynamic and technical phrases, Miss Farnardi's pedalling seems cleaner and less diffuse than Macuzyński's, and she avoids the shortbreathed manner of handling Liszt's often choppy phrases. Where bigness is concerned, the masculine hand is often more telling but at the expense of harshness. If one owns Miss Farnardi's recording of the concerto, which is excellently played and recorded, this new version will offer no problem, Macuzyński plays this work brilliantly but the same remarks anent his *Sonata* apply here, though his is a performance which is deserving of approbation, particularly for the fine orchestral direction of the conductor. If one owns a satisfactory solo version of the *E flat Concerto*, Malcuzyński's version of the *A major* would be the logical purchase of the *A major*.

—P.H.R.

RAVEL: *Alborada del Gracioso*; **LISZT:** *Sonetto del Petrarca No. 104*; **D. SCARLATTI:** *Sonatas, Longo 23 and 413*; Dinu Lipatti (piano). Columbia LP ML-2216, \$4.00.

▲WELL, this is it. The Lipatti tapes are now exhausted. For a final offering, Columbia hardly could have chosen a more efficacious display of the late artist's all-encompassing wizardry. The Ravel is a *tour de force* of incredible difficulty. To make the Liszt sound like great music is a challenge that has de-

feated more than one brilliant pianist. And nobody—not even Casadesus or Gieseeking—ever turned out the *Cortège* and *Pastorale* sonatas with such a ring of authenticity. All that need be said of Lipatti's artistry has been said long since. Those who have followed his discography will need no urging to add this last disc to their collection. The sound is, of course, something less than realistic (circa 1946-48). But it is doubtful that anyone in our time will have more musical performances to offer. The Ravel alone is worth the price of the record.

—J.L.

RAVEL: *Gaspard de la Nuit*; **DEBUSSY:** *Estampes, Images* (Sets 1 and 2); Walter Gieseeking (piano). Columbia LP disc ML-4773, \$5.95. **RAVEL:** *Gaspard de la Nuit*; **DEBUSSY:** *Suite Bergamasque*; Friedrich Gulda (piano). London LP disc LL-754, \$5.95.

▲COLUMBIA has put every lover of piano music in its debt by re-releasing the miraculous 1939 Gieseeking performances of Ravel's imaginative, atmospheric *Gaspard de la Nuit* (*Ondine, Le Gibet, Scarbo*) and Debussy's evocative *Estampes* (*Pagodes, Soirée dans Grenade, Jardins sous la pluie*). The superb *Images* have been available previously on a Columbia 10" LP. All that can be said that has not been said before is that the transfers to LP are as good as one could expect. There is some surface noise and there is a bit too much bass, but most everything is clear in spite of dated sound.

In comparison, how beautiful is the London recording of Gulda's tasteful and technically efficient performances of *Gaspard* and the *Suite Bergamasque*. But though Gulda is well ahead of most of his LP competitors, he cannot summon the cold chill of Gieseeking's playing of *Le Gibet* or can he match the demonic quality of the older pianist's performance of the finger-breaking *Scarbo*. Gulda misses the delicate charm of the *Suite Bergamasque* and as result this somewhat weak and over sugary work fails to hold the attention. If this view of Gulda seems harsh, remember that here we are using *March*, 1954

Gieseeking for a yardstick. That the young pianist manages to do as well as he does is testimony to his remarkable powers which have been demonstrated so forcefully before. To take a back seat to Gieseeking is no disgrace; one is, after all, in the company of a master.

—C.J.L.

REUBKE: *Sonata in C minor on the 94th Psalm*; **LISZT:** *Fantasia and Fugue on B.A.C.H., Gloria and Credo* from an *Organ Mass*; E. Power Biggs (organ). Columbia LP disc ML-4820, \$5.95.

▲IN many ways this is the finest organ recording ever made in America. First of all, the instrument is one of the few of the first rank we have—the old Boston Music Hall Organ now located at the Methuen Memorial Music Hall, Methuen, Mass. This is the first recording ever made of its tonal glories. Second, the engineering of Columbia is absolutely astonishing in its thrust and impact of sound, its fidelity throughout the sonic compass. Here is certainly a new yardstick by which future organ recordings must be judged. Lastly, the first appearance on LP of Liszt's grand and sumptuous *Fantasia and Fugue on B.A.C.H.* in such a noble performance as E. Power Biggs gives is further cause for rejoicing. Biggs has seldom seemed as he does here so vital, so responsive to the expressive aspects of a work of art. In the past his playing of the Reubke Sonata has been exceptional and it is no less so on this occasion. This is a most impressive disc from any viewpoint.

—C.J.L.

SCHUMANN: *Davidshuendler Taenze, Op. 6; Papillons, Op. 2*; Joerg Demus (piano). Westminster LP WL-5232, \$5.95.

Now Ready

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Volume 20

(Sept. 1952—Aug. 1953)

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Price 50c

▲THOSE who recall Demus' warmly sentient performance of the Schumann *Fantasia in C* will welcome his newest release of two other Schumann works. The first, though bearing an earlier opus number, is actually a sequel to *Carnaval*, having been written two years later. It is also occupied with those mythical characters Florestan and Eusebius which the composer invented to indicate two sides of his nature, the impulsive and the reflective. Joerg sets off these small-scaled, but wonderfully contrasting, set of pieces with expressive insight and perfect control, and in like manner plays the early *Papillons* which was by way of being a kind of sketch for *Carnaval*. Westminster's realistic piano tone has gratifying ear-appeal.

—R.R.

SCHUMANN: *Davidbueandler Dances*, Op. 6; Urania LP disc URLP-7106, \$5.95. *Kreiseriana*, Op. 16; **BACH:** *English Suite No. 6 in D minor*; Urania LP disc URLP-7107, \$5.95. **BEE-THOVEN:** *Sonatas No. 21 in C, Op. and No. 23 in F minor, Op. 57* Columbia LP disc ML-4774, \$5.95. All played by Walter Gieseeking (piano).

▲THIS LATEST rash of Gieseeking recordings have their share of excellences, but they are not quite up to the incredibly high standards some of his recent releases have achieved. The old Columbia performances of the Beethoven sonatas are miraculous, but the recordings betray their age badly. The surface noise in No. 23, the "*Appassionata*" is unusually high. Since both these sonatas are available in new, satisfactory recordings by Angel, the Columbia issue seems rather unnecessary. Urania has recorded Gieseeking better than most companies up to now, but there seems to have been little care expended in getting the most precise work from Gieseeking. There is an occasional outcropping of inaccuracies that I would ordinarily expect Gieseeking to suppress and re-record. This is not to say that the excellent *Davidbueandler Dances* and *Kreiseriana* (the best Urania performance) and the *Sixth English Suite* are not as effective as anyone else's

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versions on LP. They are. But there are not quite up to the lofty standards we expect from this fine artist.

—C.J.L.

Voice

FOLK MUSIC OF THE UNITED STATES: *Negro Songs and Services*. LP AAFFS-L-10. Library of Congress, Music Division, Washington 25, D. C. \$4.50.

▲VERBAL music is as much a part, perhaps more, of folk songs as the solid melodies behind them. We must be grateful to the Library of Congress for its studious preserving of natural poetry in the monumental series *Folk Music of the United States*. Language really takes wings in the lyrics, especially in this disc devoted to "Negro Songs and Services." Among contending excitements, "The Man of Calvary" (from an Easter Day service in 1934 by Rev. Sin-Killer Griffin, a prison chaplain) once heard may never be forgotten. "It got so dark until the men who was puttin' Jesus to death, They said they could feel the darkness in their fingers." Need we say, or show, more? Name a world, these wonders in words are out of it! Recording is not major consideration in a work like this.

—R.D.O.

GILBERT & SULLIVAN: *The Sorcerer*: The D'Oyly Carte Opera Company and The New Symphony Orchestra conducted by Isadore Godfrey. London LP set (2 discs) LL-885/6, \$11.90.

▲A LOT of new faces in the D'Oyly Carte these days. And, praise be, they perform with the same impeccable style (if not the abandon) of many of the stars of the company's halcyon days—George Baker, Darrell Fancourt, Martyn Green, Darek Oldham, Ella Halman, Margaret Mitchell, and—well, this list must stop somewhere. London has provided this group with superb engineering and the set, as a whole, is delightful without achieving the vocal incandescence of

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earlier recorded performances. Chief interest will probably center on Peter Pratt, who has taken over the Martyn Green roles. This is his first appearance on records and he makes the most of it. It would be hard to imagine a better "My name is John Wellington Wells." Among the other new names, one must not overlook the very good voice of Jeffrey Skitch, who sings Dr. Daly. Once again a debt of gratitude is due Isadore Godfrey for his light and firm direction of the orchestra. A last word about the work itself. *The Sorcerer* is an early work; it follows *Trial by Jury*; and though it has its delightful moments, it does not have quite the richness of invention or the dramatic shapeliness of some of better known Gilbert and Sullivan masterworks. —C.J.L.

MENDELSSOHN: *Saint Paul*; Laurence Dutoit (soprano), Maria Nussbaumer (contralto), Hans Loeffler (tenor), Otto Wiener (basso), Vienna Akademie Kammerchor and Pro Musica Symphony conducted by Ferdinand Grossmann. Vox set PL 8362, \$11.90.

▲THIS overdue release reminds some of us of what we have long known, that though *Saint Paul* has been overshadowed by *Elijah* and is rarely performed, actually it is the more attractive and expressive work. Its gems are among the finest arias and choruses Mendelssohn wrote, and there is plenty of interest in the lesser known sections of the score. Throughout one is conscious of the influence of Bach on his great champion, for the structure of the work is much like that of the Passions. There are incidents, too, like the chorus shouting "Steiniget ihn," which cannot fail to remind us of similar outcries in Bach.

The *Overture*, a fantasy on the chorale *Wachet auf*, makes a stirring opener. The playing here is capable rather than masterly and remains much the same throughout the set. One suspects the work was not over-rehearsed. Easily the best of the soloists is Mr. Wiener, who sings the title role with dignity and tonal beauty. Miss Dutoit, with excellent *March*, 1954

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cellent intentions, cannot keep her voice from spreading in the upper reaches, but her delivery of the text is good. Mr. Loeffler does well with the part of Stephen. Miss Nussbaumer wants more poise for her famous solo—well known in English as *But the Lord is mindful of his own*.

With the set a carefully prepared and fully documented text with translation is provided, in which each passage is located in the Scriptures. —P.L.M.

WILBYE: *Flora gave me fairest flowers; Adieu, sweet Amaryllis; And though my love abounding; As fair as morn; I fall, o stay me; Weep, o mine eyes; Hard destinies are love and beauty parted; Fly not so swift, my dear; Oft have I vowed; Sweet honey sucking bees; Yet sweet, take heed; Happy, o happy he; Ye that do live in pleasures; O what shall I do; Thus saith my Cloris bright; All pleasure is of this condition; Weep, weep, mine eyes; The Randolph Singers conducted by David Randolph. Westminster WL-5221, \$5.95.*

▲JOHN WILBYE was one of the greatest of the Elizabethans, and a glance at the above list will remind us that a considerable number of the best known madrigals are his work. Such a piece as *Sweet honey sucking bees* (inseparable from its second part, *Yet sweet, take heed*, though in this recording a band divides them) is a masterpiece of the first water, containing some of the most sonorous moving part writing ever conceived. *Adieu, sweet Amaryllis* is a disarmingly simple and touching song; *Flora gave me fairest flowers* a delightful pastoral. *Weep, o mine eyes*, here set for three voices, is intensely expressive. The program, indeed, is a veritable feast, though the performance is disappointing in view of the former good works of the Randolph Singers. Perhaps the set was planned in too much of a hurry. Some of the trouble may stem from Mr. Randolph's avowed intention "to present the interplay of the individual vocal lines with the same clarity that one would hear

if one were seated around the table with us." Ideally the voices should be parts of the whole, while never losing their own individualities. These singers remain too strongly individual. —P.L.M.

Three Sopranos

(Continued from page 212)

tuous beauty of her singing has lost little in the transfer to LP. Few of her admirers would fail to get this more convenient way of hearing her singing, unless they chose to buy the equally fine 45-rpm releases which offer an advantage of playing just what one wants without spoiling grooves as sometimes happens when one tries to locate a specific selection on LP.

The Seefried disc was intended for Christmas but arrived too late for review. Now that this talented soprano has come to our own Metropolitan, we realize anew that she remains one of the most gifted of the post-war singers. There are many moments in her Christmas recital which reveal her striking gifts—nuancing of tone and expressive loveliness. Her inclusion of Peter Cornelius' *Christmas Songs* must be applauded, for these four lieder are little gems. In all these songs, Miss Seefried proves herself at exceptional artist. Recording is excellent. —J.N.

POPS SPOTLIGHT

FOR MOVIEGOERS: Decca has put the essence of Warner Brothers' *Island in the Sky* on DL-7029, with narration by John Wayne. Myself, I am glad now that I didn't see the film. Capitol's discing of another WB picture, *The Eddie Cantor Story* (L-467) really is a delight. The old master himself sings 15 of his favorites, like *Ma and Makin' Whoopee*, with not too much voice but oh, such style.

FROM BROADWAY: Columbia has issued a sumptuous 12-incher (ML-4850) of the "musical Arabian Night" *Kismet*, with Alfred Drake and all of the rest of the original cast on hand. Alexander Borodin would roll over in his grave at it, of course,

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but it certainly is a stunning job as these shorn longhair things go. The show is a smash hit in New York; this recording should do nicely, too. But purists beware.

SHOW BIZ: That is the title—*Show Biz*—of a fascinating 12-inch from RCA Victor (LOC-1011) that amounts to a panoramic retrospect of the last fifty years in every aspect of the way of life reported by the journal so appropriately known as *Variety*. The sub-title of this disc is "from Vaude to Video," and it means what it says. George Jessel narrates, and we hear the voices of so many illustrious footlight figures that it would be a waste of space to list them here—just conjure up as many marquee immortals as you can and you are sure to find them represented somewhere in this amazing "*Variety* show." Abel Green, editor of that estimable paper and author of a book called, no doubt coincidentally, *Show Biz*, had a hand in the preparation of this omnibus recording. All credit to him, and our assurance that for once the "stix" will not "nix" the "cix pix," as *Variety* might say in its inimitable telegraphic prose.

GERSHWINIANA: Walden offers a 12-inch entitled *Gershwin Rarities, Volume I* (Walden 302) that excavates 10 of the composer's lesser known songs, among them *Funny Face*, *Soon, Stiff Upper Lip* and *Shall We Dance?* Kaye Ballard, David Craig and Betty Gillett sing them affectionately, with David Baker and John Morris at the pianos. On Columbia AL-39, the allegedly incomparable Hildegarde (I guess she is, at that) is joined by Fred Astaire (dancing, of course), Larry Adler (playing the harmonica, of course) and the composer himself, among others, in a collection of vintage repressings that really bring back memories.

FOR DANCING- ETC.: The MGM Lion label has been a boon to the pocketbook. E-70012 assembles a bunch of redoubtables like *Tea for Two*, played serviceably by a hotel orchestra. E-70013 is a brace of eight polkas, served up in typical *Krawowiak* fashion by Ted Tyle and his orchestra, whoever they are. E-70014 brings Jerry Wald (I had wondered what happened to him) front and center once again with sure-fire numbers like *I Love Paris*, *Ebb Tide* and *The Moon Is Blue*, all done to a turn. E-70015 features Rene Touzet and his orchestra in a clutch of mambos and rumbas, including the inevitable *Tenderly* and *The Continental*; Touzet is no Cugat but his price is nowhere as high, either. Still on MGM, Paul Britten and his orchestra skip handily through the waltz repertory from the musicals of Richard Rodgers on E-197, and the classically grounded pianist Ken Clarke displays (on E-205) that the best way to train short hair is to grow it long first.

(No self-taught ivory tickler ever could do what Clarke does with, say, *The St. Louis Blues*.) The ubiquitous Eddie Fisher, on RCA Victor LPM-3185, "salutes" a few of his eminent predecessors in the crooning business. As employed by the guy who wrote the copy for the jacket liner, "salutes" means that Fisher simply selected a group of songs

that had been made famous already by others (e.g., *April Showers* by Al Jolson) and proceeded to parlay their collective astuteness. He does sing well, though. So do the Ames Brothers, who essay another batch of favorites (*It Must Be True, Ol' Man River* and such) on LPM-3186. And so, emphatically, does "That Bad Eartha" Kitt (RCA's pun, not mine, honest injun) who teases her way through the likes of *My Heart Belongs to Daddy* and *Let's Do It* on LPM-3187. If you want to split a hair she really doesn't focus a tone as well as the next songstress, but the latter—take your pick—just ain't got that Kitt touch. Nor has anyone ever quite equalled the late Glen Miller, and RCA is still on their Miller kick; LPT-3057 collates the highlights of *The Glenn Miller Story* (maybe this should have been listed under films, but the program is played by the original group, with the late Miller himself fronting); as you would expect if you saw the picture, the contents include *Moonlight Serenade*, *In the Mood*, *String of Pearls*, *Tuzado Junction* and three other, less successful but still entirely characteristic Miller classics.

NEW WINE: Richard Jones has reworked the tried and true techniques of Kostelanetz and Fiedler and come up with yet another gimmick on Capitol's L-419. The program is strictly box office (*Yesterdays*, *Love Walked In*, *Lille Girl Blue* etc.) but the string ensemble is made up 100 per cent of Pittsburgh Symphony virtuosos. The result is, in its way, enchanting; these guys can outplay any tavern combo at anything, even such trifles as these. If this disc is a success it could augur evil days for the incompetents who have monopolized the light-light classical market heretofore.

LE BON DIEU: Perry Como, on LPM-3188, ranges from *Onward Christian Soldiers* to *Eli, Eli*, backed up by choruses and the Hugh Winterhalter orchestra. Como is a dependable artist, and he had the good sense to subdue his familiarly brilliant vocal colors for this reverent recital. Those who know the poems of James Weldon Johnson that were published collectively under the title of *God's Trombones* will want to hear the similarly entitled Decca disc (DL-8047) by Fred Waring and his Pennsylvanians. Frank Davis, Gertrude Jeannette, Walter Scheff and Stuart Churchill are the soloists in this fine sextet of spirituals. All of them are beautifully sung, and the last-named singer is especially effective with *Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?* When is some company going to embark on a systematic recording of the extant spirituals? I can't imagine a more worthy project, and it might prove profitable as well as edifying.

POST SCRIPT: No room to get around to the jazz stuff this time. Amends are in the making, however; henceforth I will be every month instead of every other issue. In the meantime go get MGM's marvelous E-217, which is the long-awaited second LP from Preacher Rollo and his Five Saints. Once you have heard it you won't be able to be mad at anybody for anything. A bientot.

—JAS.

March, 1954

NEW RELEASES for March

BACH: *Harpsichord Concertos No. 1 in D mi., No. 4 in A, No. 5 in F mi.;* Videro, Friisholm, Collegium Musicum Orch. Haydn Soc. 92.

BACH: *Concerto in D mi. (Violin & Oboe);* Hendriks, Tottcher, Koch, Radio Berlin Cham. Orch.; **HAYDN:** *Cello Concerto in D;* Holscher, Koch Berlin Phil. Orch. Urania 7-31.

BACH: *Partita No. 4;* **SCHUBERT:** *Laendleri;* **LISZT:** *Mephisto Walts;* Wm. Kapell. RCA-Vict. LM-1791.

BACH: *Passacaglia & Fugue in C mi.; Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring; Toccata, Adagio & Fugue in C;* **HANDEL:** *Concerto in G mi., Op. 7, No. 5;* Feike Alma (organ). Epic 3025.

BARTOK: *Concerto No. 2 for Piano; Rhapsody for Piano and Orch., Op. 1;* Andor Foldes, Bigot, Lamoureux Orch. Vox 8220.

BAX: *Coronation March;* **WALTON:** *Orb & Sceptre;* Sargent, London Sym. Orch. 10" Lond. LD-9046.

BEETHOVEN: *Bagatelles, Op. 126; 5 Pieces, Op. Posth.; Variations for Flute & Piano, Op. 105 K 107;* Dirksen (piano). Mann (flute). Esoteric 525 & 526.

BEETHOVEN: *Concerto No. 1 in C, Op. 15; Rondo in B flat, Op. Posth.;* Wuehrer. Swarowsky, Pro Musica Sym. Orch. Vox 8400.

BEETHOVEN: *Musik zu einem Ritterballet;* **LULLY:** *Ballet Suite;* **MOZART:** *Les Petites Riens, K. 299b;* Weigel & Pfleger, Radio Berlin Sym. Orch. Urania 7111.

BEETHOVEN: *Octet Rondo in E flat; Trio in E flat, Op. 87; Vars. in C on Mozart's "Reich mi. die Hand";* Kamesch, Kautsky, Hadamowsky West. 5262.

BEETHOVEN: *Quartet No. 9 in C, Op. 59, No. 3; Quartet No. 10 in E flat, Op. 74 (Harp);* Vegh Quartet. Haydn Soc. 40.

BEETHOVEN: *Quintet in E flat, Op. 16; MOZART:* *Quintet in E flat, K. 452;* Serkin, Phila. Wind Quintet Members. Col. ML-4834.

BEETHOVEN: *Sonata No. 23 in F mi., Op. 57 (Appassionata);* **SCHUBERT:** *Moments Musicaux, Op. 94;* Edwin Fischer. HMV 1055.

BEETHOVEN: *Sonatas for Violin (1-10);* Heifetz & Bey. RCA-Vict. set LM-6701 (5-12").

BEETHOVEN: *Sonata No. 2 in A, Op. 12; Sonata No. 9 in A, Op. 47 (Kreutzer);* Fournier & Doyen. West. 5275.

BEETHOVEN: *Sonata No. 5 in F, Op. 24 (Spring);* **MOZART:** *Sonata in B flat, K. 454;* Menuhin & Kentner. HMV 1053.

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 5 in C mi., Op. 67;* Kleiber, Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orch. Lond. LL-912.

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 6 in F, Op. 68 (Pastorale);* Beecham, Royal Phil. Orch. Col. ML-4828.

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 7 in A, Op. 92;* Van Kempen, Berlin Phil. Orch. Epic 3026.

BENATZKY: *The White Horse Inn;* **JONES:** *The Geisha;* Solists, Chorus, Otto, Berlin Municipal Opera Orch. 10" Lond. LD-9068.

BERLIOZ: *Symphonie Fantastique, Op. 14;* Scherchen, London Sym. Orch. West. 5268.

BIZET: *Carmen—Orch. Suite;* Kostelanetz & His Orch. Col. ML-4826

BORODIN: *In the Steppes of Central Asia; Polovetsian Dances;* Stokowski & His Orch. RCA Vict. LRM-7056.

BRAHMS: *Concerto No. 1 in D mi., Op. 15;* Serkin. Szell, Cleveland Orch. Col. ML-4829.

BRAHMS: *Rhapsodies, Op. 79, Nos. 1 & 2;* Kempff. 10" Lond. LD-9048.

BRAHMS: *Sextet in G, Op. 36;* Huebner, Weiss, Vienna Konzerthaus Quartet. West. 5263.

BRAHMS: *Sonatas No. 1 in E mi., Op. 38 & No. 2 in F, Op. 99;* Starker & Bogin. Period 593.

BRAHMS: *Symphonies Nos. 1-4;* Toscanini, NBC Sym. Orch. (Limited Ed. RCA Vict. LM-6108 (3-12").

BRAHMS: *Symphony No. 1 in C mi., Op. 68;* Cantelli, Philharmonia Orch. HMV 1054.

BRAHMS: *Symphony No. 2 in D, Op. 73;* Ormandy, Phila. Orch. Col. ML-4827.

BRUCKNER: *Symphony No. 4 in E flat (Romantic);* Van Otterloo, Hague Phil. Orch.; **MAHLER:** *Kindertotenlieder;* Schey, van Otterloo, same orch. Epic SC-6001 (2-12").

CHABRIER: *Espana Rapsodie; Suite Pastorale; Fete Polonoise; Joyeuse Marche; Guendoline—Overture;* Fournet, Orch. des Concerts Lamoureux. Epic 3028.

CHARPENTIER, A.: *Mass & Symphony "Assumpta est Maria";* Soloists, Chorus, Martini, Orch. Vox 8440.

CHOPIN: *Trio in G mi., Op. 8;* **SCHUMANN:** *Trio No. 2 in F, Op. 80;* Trio di Bolzano. Vox 8480.

CLIMAROSA: *Il Maestro di Capella (complete); Il Matrimonio Segreto—Excerpts;* Soloists, Gerelli, Milan Cham. Orch. Vox. 8450.

CORELLI: *Concerto Grosso in F, Op. 6, No. 12;* **ROSENMUELLER:** *Suite in C mi. from "Studentenmusik";* **TELEMANN:** *Suite in D;* Liersch, Collegium Musicum. Urania 7113.

DELIBES: *Music from "Coppelia" and "Sylvia";* **GOUNOD:** *Faust—Ballet Music;* **RABAUD:** *Marouf—Ballet Music;* Fournet, Lamoureux Orch. Epic 3030.

DELIBES: *La Source—Ballet Music;* **SIBELIUS:** *Valse triste;* **JARNEFELT:** *Praeludium;* Olof, Suisse Romande Orch. 10" London LD-9049.

DVORAK: *Symphony No. 4 in G, Op. 88;* Pfluger, Radio Leipzig Sym. Orch. Urania 7-29.

DVORAK: *Symphony No. 5 in E mi., Op. 95* (New World); Toscanini, NBC Sym. Orch. RCA Vict. LM-1778.

FRANCK: *Sonata in A*; **STRAUSS:** *Sonata in E flat, Op. 18*; Heifetz & Sandor. RCA Vict. LCT-1122.

GEMINIANI: *Concerti Grossi, Op. 3, Nos. 1-6*; Barchet Quartet, Reinhardt, Pro Musica String Orch. Vox 8290.

GEMINIANI: *Concerto Grosso, Op. 3, No. 3*; **VIVALDI:** *Sinfonia No. 2 in G and Concerto Grosso in A mi., Op. 3, No. 8*; **MARCELLO:** *Concerto Grosso in F, Op. 1, No. 4*; Societa Corelli. RCA Vict. LM-1767.

GIORDANO: *Andrea Chenier* (complete); Caniglia, Gigli, Bechi, etc., Fabritius, Chorus, LaScala Orch. RCA Vict. LCT-6014 (2-12").

GOUNOD: *Faust* (complete); Christoff, Gedda, de los Angeles, etc., Cluytens, Paris Opera Chorus & Orch. RCA Vict. LM-6400 (4-12").

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HAYDN: *The Creation*; Soloists, Chorus, Koch, Radio Berlin Sym. Orch. Urania 235 (2-12").

HAYDN: *Symphonies No. 96 and 97*; Van Bejunum, Concertgebouw Orch. Lond. LL-854.

HINDEMITH: *Das Marienleben*; Jennie Tourle & E. I. Kahn. Col. SL-196 (2-12").

KREISLER: *Quartet in A minor*; **PAGANINI:** *Quartet in E*; Stuyvesant String Quartet. Philharmonia 107.

LISZT: *Sonata in B mi.; Sonetto del Petrarca No. 104*; Alexander Uninsky. Epic 3027.

MALIPIERO: *Concerto for Violin*; Kirmse, Kleinert, Radio Leipzig Sym. Orch.; **RAKOV:** *Concerto for Violin*; Gavrilov, Rother, Radio Berlin Sym. Orch. Urania 7112.

MEDELSSOHN: *The Destruction of Derftanaz*; *Ruy Blas Overture*; **BEETHOVEN:** *"Jena" Symphony*; Schartner, Radio Berlin Sym. Orch. Urania 7114.

MOUSSORGSKY: *Songs and Dances of Death*; Rehfuß & Haecusslin. 10" Lond. LD-9070.

MOZART: *Bastien und Bastienne, K. 50*; Hollweg, Kmetz, Pritchard, Vienna Sym. Orch. Col. ML-4835.

MOZART: *Cassation No. 1 in G, K. 63*; *Serenade No. 11 in E flat, K. 375*; Haarth, Radio Berlin Cham. Orch. Urania 7-32.

MOZART: *Concertos No. 9 in E flat, K. 271 & No. 20 in D minor, K. 466*; Novaes, Swarowsky, Pro Musica Orch. Vox 8430.

MOZART: *Concertos No. 1 in G, K. 313 & No. 2 in D, K. 314 (Flute)*; Barwaher, Pritchard, Vienna Sym. Orch. Epic 3033.

MOZART: *Divertimento in B flat, K. 287*; Prohaska, Vienna State Opera Orch. Vang. 444

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ROSSINI: *Il Signor Bruschino* (complete); Soloists, Gerelli, Milan Phil. Orch. Vox 8460.

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SCHUBERT: *Quintet in C, Op. 163*; Pleeth, Amadeus String Quartet. HMV 1051.

SCHUBERT: *Sonata in B flat*; **SCHUMANN:** *Leaves of Different Color, Op. 99*; Clara Haskil. Epic 3031.

SCHUBERT: *Sonata in C minor; Sonata in B, Op. 147*; Weuhrer. Vox 8420.

SCHUMANN: *Humoresque, Op. 20; Sonata No. 2 in G mi., Op. 22*; Joerg Demus. West. 5264.

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STRAUSS, Joh. *Polkas, Marches, Waltzes*; Paulik, Vienna State Opera Orch. Vang. 443.

STRAUSS, R. *Don Juan, Op. 20*; Till Eulenspiegel, Op. 28; **LISZT:** *Les Preludes; Jochum*, Concertgebouw Orch. Epic 3032.

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STRAVINSKY: *Pulcinella*; Stravinsky, Cleveland Orch. Col. ML-4830.

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TCHAIKOVSKY: *Symphony No. 5, Op. 64*; Stokowski & His Orch. RCA Vict. LM-1780.

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